



# Australian Bureau of Statistics

## 2050.0.55.002 - Position Paper - ABS Review of Counting the Homeless Methodology, Aug 2011

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## Summary

### About this Release

In March 2011 the ABS published the Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006 (cat. no. 2050.0). That paper described the researcher methodology that had been previously used, and proposed a range of methodological changes that would be needed before consistent, transparent and repeatable official estimates could be made of the number of people enumerated in the Census that were likely to have been homeless on Census night. The Discussion Paper also outlined a process of consultation on the findings, to inform a final methodology to be published by end July 2011. The consultation on the review findings has confirmed the significance of the areas of likely underestimation of homelessness in relation to youth, Indigenous people and people escaping domestic violence. However, no alternative estimation methods have yet been developed to address the issues of underestimation for homelessness in these groups.

This ABS Position Paper:

- summarises the wide range of key issues identified so far in consultation (from public and private consultation sessions and written submissions received);
- addresses as far as is currently possible, the issues raised in consultation;
- reiterates and further articulates the concerns expressed in the Discussion Paper about underestimation of key groups of homeless people;
- notes the establishment of a Homelessness Statistics Reference Group; and
- describes future developments in homelessness estimation, including but not limited to a proposed quality study about homeless school students.

Guided by the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group, the ABS will continue to undertake research and development to inform the final methodology that will be used to report on homelessness from the 2011 Census, including the recompilation of consistent estimates from both the 2001 and 2006 Censuses.

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## Preface

## PREFACE

In March 2011 the ABS published the **Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006** (ABS cat. no. 2050.0.55.001). That paper noted the importance of the issue of homelessness for society and governments, and the need for quality data for decision making purposes, particularly for measuring change over time. In that context, the Discussion Paper described a methodology that had been previously used, and proposed a range of methodological changes that would be needed before consistent, transparent and repeatable official estimates could be made of the number of people enumerated in the Census who were likely to have been homeless on Census night.

The March 2011 Discussion Paper also outlined a process of consultation on the findings, to inform a final methodology to be published by end July 2011. The subsequent consultation on the review findings has confirmed the Discussion Paper's position on the significance of the areas of likely underestimation of homelessness in relation to youth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people escaping domestic and family violence. However, no alternative estimation methods have yet been developed to address the issues of underestimation for homelessness in these groups.

This ABS Position Paper:

- summarises the range of key issues identified so far in consultation (from public and private consultation sessions and written submissions received);
- addresses, as far as is currently possible, the issues raised in consultation;
- reiterates and further articulates the concerns expressed in the Discussion Paper about underestimation of key groups of homeless people;
- notes the establishment of a Homelessness Statistics Reference Group; and
- describes future developments in homelessness estimation, including but not limited to a proposed quality study about homeless school students.

Guided by the new Homelessness Statistics Reference Group, the ABS will continue to undertake research and development to inform the final methodology that will be used to report on homelessness from the 2011 Census. A new methodology will be published in May 2012 and will include the recompilation of consistent estimates from both the 2001 and 2006 Censuses.

This edition of the Position Paper includes additional analysis undertaken on the range of key issues identified in the Paper.

In the Acknowledgements section of this paper the effort and contribution of the wide range of stakeholders who participated in the consultation on the Discussion Paper has been noted. The ABS particularly acknowledges the contributions from homelessness services organisations and their staff.

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## Acknowledgements

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The ABS acknowledges the effort and contribution of the wide range of stakeholders who participated in the consultation on the **Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006** (ABS cat. no. 2050.0.55.001) that was published on 31 March, 2011. Over 150 stakeholders attended the subsequent discussion forums that were held in all capital cities, while many more attended sector or jurisdictional specific consultations. To date, the ABS has received 35 submissions in response to the Discussion Paper.

The ABS particularly acknowledges the contributions from homelessness services organisations and their staff who were very busy preparing to repeat, once again, their strong support for the enumeration of homeless people in the 2011 Census, but were also able to attend consultation meetings and respond to the Discussion Paper's call for submissions. The homelessness services, among other stakeholders, have also volunteered to serve on the new Homelessness Statistics Reference Group, and ABS looks forward to a productive relationship as it builds its homelessness statistics work program.

The ABS again acknowledges the contributions to the review made by the review Steering Committee members from the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, and from three states (New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia) represented on the inter-jurisdictional Housing and Homelessness Information Management Group (reporting to the Housing Ministers' Advisory Committee).

In addition, the ABS repeats the acknowledgement provided throughout the recent consultation, of the groundbreaking work that Professors Chris Chamberlain and David MacKenzie undertook in establishing a world first approach to push the use of Census data, in the estimation of the homelessness population, beyond the 'rough sleeper' and supported accommodation categories.

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## **Overview**

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### **OVERVIEW**

### **BACKGROUND**

The ABS initiated the methodological review of **Counting the Homeless** (ABS cat. no. 2050.0) by engaging with a range of stakeholders, including researchers and the homelessness services sector, and with the advice of a Steering Committee comprising representatives from the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, and from three states (New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia) represented on the inter-jurisdictional Housing and Homelessness Information Management Group (reporting to the Housing Ministers' Advisory Committee).

Following an initiating review workshop on 21 October 2009, with Professors Chamberlain and MacKenzie, and representatives from Homelessness Australia, as well as from

Commonwealth, state/territory and local government organisations, the nature of the ABS's concerns with the **Counting the Homeless 2006** methodology were outlined in **Issues in estimating the number of homeless in Australia: A paper to inform a review of Counting the Homeless methodology**. This was made available on the National Homelessness Information Clearinghouse website in October 2009, and submissions were sought. Submissions were received from government organisations, academics and eight homelessness services sector organisations. Workshops to progress the review, which involved Professors Chamberlain and MacKenzie, were held in May 2010 and October 2010.

The ABS's initial findings from the methodological review were published on 31 March 2011 in the **Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006** (ABS cat. no. 2050.0.55.001). That Discussion Paper announced a public submissions process and a series of advertised public forums in each capital city. That paper noted the importance of the issue of homelessness for society and governments, and the need for quality data for decision making purposes, particularly for measuring change over time. In that context, the Discussion Paper described a methodology that had been previously used, and proposed a range of methodological changes that would be needed before consistent, transparent and repeatable official estimates could be made of the number of people enumerated in the Census who were likely to have been homeless on Census night.

## CONSULTATION

To maximise exposure to the review findings, the advertised public forum details were also emailed directly to many stakeholders, and the forums were held in each capital city through April and May 2011. Over 150 people attended the public forums, and many more attended sector or jurisdictional specific discussions with the ABS. The ABS was also invited to participate in discussions about the review findings in a range of meetings. There were 35 written submissions in response to the Discussion paper.

Consultation on the review findings has confirmed the Discussion Paper's emphasis on the significance of the areas of likely underestimation of homelessness in relation to youth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people escaping domestic violence. However, no alternative estimation methods have yet been developed to address the issues of underestimation for homelessness in these groups.

This ABS Position Paper:

- summarises the range of key issues identified so far in consultation (from public and private consultation sessions and written submissions received);
- addresses, as far as is currently possible, the issues raised in consultation;
- reiterates and further articulates the concerns expressed in the Discussion Paper about underestimation of key groups of homeless people;
- notes the establishment of a Homelessness Statistics Reference Group (HSRG); and
- describes future developments in homelessness estimation, including but not limited to a proposed quality study about homeless school students.

This edition of the Position Paper includes additional analysis undertaken on the range of key issues identified in the Paper.

## THEMES IN THE CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

The submissions supported rigorous quality estimation of homelessness and highlighted the importance of consistent, repeatable and transparent estimates. Some submissions requested that a continuous quality assurance plan be implemented to continue to improve and maintain high quality estimates. It is expected that the new ABS Homelessness Statistics Reference Group will play a key role in guiding the direction of that plan and in advising on the quality aspects of developments that are underway or planned for the future. This includes a final methodology that will be used to report on homelessness from the 2011 Census.

No submissions put the view that the ABS should not produce homelessness estimates from the Census, and many commented that the Census was currently the best source on which to base a point-in-time estimate of homelessness in a comprehensive way.

Many submissions argued that the Review had been too focussed on identifying the possible overestimates in the former methodology, and the majority of submissions sought a clearer articulation and possible scaling of areas of greatest underestimation (for example for youth, people fleeing domestic and family violence, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people).

Other themes that were common were:

- recognition of the limitations in every existing dataset for use in the estimation of homelessness;
- that to better understand flows and the trends in repeat periods of homelessness, the duration of spells of homelessness etc, it was important to have more than just point-in-time (prevalence) measures, and the wider ABS work program on homelessness statistics, underway or planned, was noted;
- general agreement that there needs to be some additional research into understanding the size of the homeless youth population, including any under-enumeration in the Census, in response to which ABS is proposing a quality study of homeless school students;
- a wide range of measurement issues, many of which are discussed in this Position Paper, and mentioned briefly below.

## **Improved enumeration**

Several initiatives are underway with the 2011 Census that will improve enumeration, and potentially also estimation, of the homeless population. While exact numbers are not available for the 2001 Census, the resources for specialist field staff dedicated to the homelessness count were increased in the 2006 Census to over 250 staff. For the 2011 Census, these resources have been increased to over 550 specialist field staff. In addition, the ABS has been working with homeless service providers in each state and territory to encourage accurate reporting of no usual address by all homeless people including those who are 'couch surfing'.

## **Definition of homelessness**

On balance, the submission process has surfaced significant interest in a review of the definition of homelessness used in Australia, whether or not that review would confirm the continued use of a cultural definition (with or without adjustments to its current application), or lead to the development of a new definition. ABS will include this review in its work program and progress the issues through the new HSRG.

## **New category - 'Persons staying in other temporary lodgings'**

There was wide-spread support for the creation of the new category in the reviewed estimates of 'Persons staying in other temporary lodgings' which reclassified these people from the boarding house category. These people were reported in the Census without a usual address and were staying in public hospitals, private hospitals, hostels for the disabled etc. The use of this new category will be further explored by ABS and the findings taken to the HSRG for advice.

## **Boarding houses**

There were several different views on measuring homelessness in boarding houses, ranging from the conceptual through to identification in enumeration through to estimation methodology. The ABS will pursue quality lists of boarding houses for use when enumerating future Censuses. ABS will look closely at the classification of boarding houses during enumeration to assess in real time the quality of enumeration to support adjustments in presenting results for this group. Any new lists that become available during processing will be reviewed. ABS will also continue its analysis of derivation rules for this complex aspect of estimation and take its findings for refining the rules for identifying boarding houses to the HSRG.

## **Natural disaster areas**

The ABS is developing a strategy to analyse and report on homelessness in areas affected by recent disaster events which it will take to the HSRG.

## **Youth**

Many submissions recognised both the challenges in the estimation of homelessness among youth for whom a usual address is reported in the Census, and the imperative of solving measurement for a significant group of young homeless people. The ABS is therefore developing a small and targeted quality study of homeless school students just after the Census to help understand the possible level of homelessness, and in particular, inform on how this is manifested in Census reporting. If successful, the study will also scope a possible methodology for a more frequent nationally representative survey of homeless school students. Again, ABS's work in this area will be guided by the HSRG.

## **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians**

The Discussion Paper described a range of issues associated with estimating homeless Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. A range of work program activities, including community focus group work on concepts and measurement, are planned. It is expected that the increased effort in the 2011 Census to improve the enumeration of Indigenous Australians will be a very good first step, but being able to differentiate between those who may be homeless and/or living in overcrowded circumstances remains a challenge.

## **Other key issues**

Also raised in consultation and discussed briefly in this Position Paper, are conceptual and /or measurement issues associated with:

- new migrants and culturally and linguistically diverse populations;
- domestic and family violence and women's experience of homelessness, with complex conceptual issues as well as difficult measurement issues for people who may be seeking to remain hidden;

- marginal residents of caravan parks and overcrowding, which have some common conceptual issues as well as complex measurement difficulties;
- the identification of travellers, including 'grey nomads' separate from those older people who may be homeless, and older homeless people more generally;
- a better future articulation of the different people and their circumstances when enumerated in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out, which will be better supported through real time analysis during Census processing; and
- options for finding and using other data sources to help both scale measurement gaps in estimation from the Census, and hopefully assist in recalibrating those estimates.

These are discussed in more detail in the key issues chapters of this Position Paper.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The Future directions section of this Position Paper brings together the future steps for each issue discussed throughout the paper, as well as highlighting directions in the wider ABS homelessness statistics work program, including:

- options for improving both enumeration and estimation in future Censuses, including the possible inclusion of new content around, for example, health status, so that the homeless population can be compared with the rest of the population. Homelessness in the Census may therefore be able to be studied in terms of its cause arising from other factors, or its consequence for other outcomes in life;
- the potential use of several ABS household surveys to report on past periods of homelessness, from which a picture of the incidence of homeless can be derived, as well as trends in homelessness over time, at least for those who transition out of a period of homelessness. The ABS homeless module has been run in the 2010 General Social Survey, is being tested for the 2012 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, and is under development for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey. Specific aspects of homeless, such as in the context of domestic violence, are being trialled for ABS surveys;
- the ABS will investigate using the 5% Statistical Longitudinal Census Dataset (SLCD) to undertake longitudinal analysis of the circumstances of those who have been identified as likely to be homeless. The circumstances of people identified as likely to be homeless on the 2011 SLCD can then be compared with their circumstances in 2006, and into the future it should be possible to report on repeat periods of homelessness and long term outcomes as seen in the SLCD. It will also be possible to compare these results, for those likely to be homeless, with the rest of the population.

## FINALISING THE METHODOLOGICAL REVIEW

ABS will work with the HSRG to finalise, for publication in May 2012, a methodology for producing official estimates of the number of people enumerated in the Census that were likely to have been homeless on Census night. There are many aspects of the methodology that need to be finalised, as noted in this Position Paper. Methodological aspects that require analysis of Census data during input processing will need to be resolved by the end of 2011, while methodological aspects that analyse output variables can be resolved shortly thereafter, and will be published in May 2012, along with recompiled estimates for both 2001 and 2006. Official estimates of homelessness from the 2011 Census will be published after second release Census variables are published in October 2012.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The ABS acknowledges the effort and contribution of the wide range of stakeholders who participated in the consultation on the Discussion Paper. The ABS particularly acknowledges the contributions from homelessness services organisations and their staff.

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# Methodological review consultation / submission process

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## METHODOLOGICAL REVIEW CONSULTATION / SUBMISSION PROCESS

### INITIAL CONSULTATION

The ABS initiated the methodological review of **Counting the Homeless** (CTH) by engaging with a range of stakeholders, including researchers and the homelessness services sector, and with the advice of a Steering Committee comprising representatives from the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, and from three states (New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia) represented on the inter-jurisdictional Housing and Homelessness Information Management Group (reporting to the Housing Ministers' Advisory Committee).

An initiating review workshop was held on 21 October 2009, with Professors Chamberlain and MacKenzie, and representatives from Homelessness Australia, as well as from Commonwealth, state/territory and local government organisations. The nature of the ABS's concerns with the **Counting the Homeless 2006** methodology were outlined by the ABS in **Issues in estimating the number of homeless in Australia: A paper to inform a review of Counting the Homeless methodology**, which was made available on the National Homelessness Information Clearinghouse website in October 2009, and submissions were sought.

Submissions were received from government organisations, academics and eight homelessness services sector organisations. Workshops to progress the review, which involved Professors Chamberlain and MacKenzie, were held in May 2010 and October 2010.

The ABS's initial findings from the methodological review were published on 31 March 2011 in the **Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006** (ABS cat. no. 2050.0.55.001). That Discussion Paper announced a public submissions process over the following three months and a series of advertised public forums in each capital city.

### CONSULTATION ON THE DISCUSSION PAPER INITIAL FINDINGS

The **Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006** (ABS cat. no. 2050.0.55.001) was designed to initiate discussion with key stakeholders and interested members of the public on the review's initial findings.

To maximise exposure to the findings, the advertised public forum details were also emailed directly to many stakeholders, and the forums were held in each capital city through April and May 2011. Over 150 people attended the public forums, and many more attended sector or jurisdictional specific discussions with the ABS. The ABS was also invited to participate in discussions about the review findings in a range of meetings.

The structure of the discussion forums was designed to both explain the proposed changes to homelessness estimation methodology as a result of the review of **Counting the Homeless** (CTH) and seek feedback from stakeholders on both the estimation approaches and wider issues in homelessness measurement. As the Discussion Paper was the first time that the CTH methodology had had its assumptions tested, the discussion forums were expected to help inform stakeholders both of the nature of the CTH estimates and of the differences proposed with the reviewed estimates. It was expected that these forums would support the submission process by bringing both the estimation issues and the wider homelessness measurement issues to the fore.

However, some of the complexities in the CTH methodology were new to most stakeholders, and when the detailed information on the **Counting the Homeless** methodology was coupled with the new ABS material testing the CTH assumptions, in some of the forums there was insufficient time for attendees to further discuss their thoughts and opinions about the proposed changes. To help capture that input as early as possible in the consultation period, forum participants were encouraged to put their issues in writing to ABS as early as possible, even if their final submissions were not lodged until much later.

Following the public discussion forums, and prior to any submissions being received, ABS met in late May 2011 with 24 representatives from Homelessness Australia in a facilitated discussion about the review findings. At that meeting, Homelessness Australia and ABS agreed that they had a common goal to develop good estimates of homelessness. There was also a common recognition of the importance of having an understanding of services experience in order to understand the complexity that is homelessness, and in turn to understand appropriate methodological approaches and to assess aspects of the quality of any estimates that are produced. Other key points from the meeting included:

- recognition of the limitations in every existing dataset for use in the estimation of homelessness;
- that to better understand flows and the trends in repeat periods of homelessness, the duration of spells of homelessness etc, it was important to have more than just point-in-time (prevalence) measures, and the wider ABS work program on homelessness statistics underway or planned was noted;
- a wide range of measurement issues, which were also picked up in submissions and are discussed below under the theme headings or discussed in separate Key Issues sections of this Position Paper;
- general agreement that there needs to be some additional research into understanding the size of the homeless youth population, including any under-enumeration in the Census, in response to which ABS is proposing a quality study of homeless school students;
- the need for Homelessness Australia and the ABS to work together in the future, including through the newly formed Homelessness Statistics Reference Group, to develop a richer and more reliable information base for analysis and reporting on homelessness in Australia; and
- ABS noting the need to finalise, by late 2011, any decisions on a reviewed estimation methodology to be used with 2011 Census data (and backcast to 2001 and 2006 for trend estimation). ABS and Homelessness Australia agreed to use this time to give due consideration to the comments provided throughout the consultation process,

including for areas of measurement where there was no immediate solution to issues of underestimation. The need for more time to reflect on and address the issues raised in consultation was a common theme throughout the consultation process.

## Main themes from consultation

There were common themes in the statistical issues raised during the various consultation phases, from the initial workshop in late 2009 through to the submissions in response to the Discussion Paper. The statistical issues are brought together and discussed under the theme headings below and in the separate forthcoming second edition of this Position Paper.

Another issue raised by some homelessness services stakeholders was a concern about whether new estimates of the number of people enumerated in the Census who are likely to have been homeless on Census night, which are lower than the estimates included in the CTH report, may result in a reduced focus on, or funding for, homelessness services. ABS noted that a prevalence (point-in-time) measure, while useful for monitoring trends is only one aspect of the complexity that is homelessness. The ABS Discussion Paper provided a possible range for a relatively large estimate of the number of people experiencing homelessness during a year, which could provide the focus for understanding another dimension of the scale of the issue. ABS household surveys will commence reporting official statistics on this measurement perspective from late 2011. This and other ABS homelessness work program initiatives will report further on homelessness to improve measurement and reporting beyond a five-yearly prevalence estimate at the time of each Census. Together these data developments are expected, over time, to improve the evidence base for decision making.

## ***Actions following consultation meetings***

During the consultation meetings the ABS agreed to:

- undertake further analysis and provide additional data to attendees of the discussion forums to further test the revised methodology. The additional material despatched to consultation participants included estimates for smaller geographic regions (Statistical Local Areas, and Statistical Subdivisions); and Age and Indigenous status disaggregated by State/Territory; No usual address; Need for assistance; and Indigenous status disaggregated by age;
- establish a Homelessness Statistics Reference Group (HSRG) with representation from the sector, policy agencies and the research community that will guide the wider ABS homelessness measurement work program, including estimation from the Census. The HSRG is now established and will meet in the coming months;
- publish any changes to estimation methodology that are developed through ongoing consultation and advice from the HSRG, including any implications of harnessing other data sources to re-estimate earlier point-in-time estimates from the 2001 and 2006 Censuses;
- secure funding for a proposed quality study into homeless school students. The funding has been agreed;
- publish a position paper one month after the completion of the post Discussion Paper submission period to provide a clearer statement of where the ABS already acknowledges shortcomings in the use of the Census for the purposes of estimating the homeless, as well as making it clearer that there are significant data gaps, and that further work will be required to produce estimates that can be relied upon for reporting the scale of homelessness in Australia, and to measure trends. In progressing that further work, the ABS will work with the sector and others, both bilaterally and through

the new HSRG.

## SUBMISSIONS

The publication on 31 March 2011 of the **Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006** (cat. no. 2050.0.55.001) invited submissions on the review findings. Up until 27 July the ABS had received 35 submissions. The submissions were lodged by local councils and state government departments, homelessness peak bodies, homeless services providers, researchers and unions. While the main themes from the submissions have been captured in this paper, the ABS is still reviewing the submissions for any additional implications they may have on future methodology, including the availability and potential of some additional sources of data that were identified in the submissions. ABS will separately follow up with the providers of those submissions.

Overall, the themes in the submissions were consistent with those raised at the discussion forums, but provided more detail. For example, some of the submissions discussed the specifics of the adjustments made in deriving the reviewed estimates published in the Discussion Paper, and provided different opinions on whether a change was required, and if so, what the new methodology should be. The ABS will draw on the expertise of the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group in making its decisions for a final reviewed methodology.

### Main themes from submissions

#### *General comments about the methodology*

The submissions supported rigorous high quality estimation of homelessness, and highlighted the importance of consistent, repeatable and transparent estimates. One submission noted that a peer review of the CTH methodology was long overdue. Some submissions requested a continuous quality assurance plan be implemented to continue to improve and maintain high quality estimates.

The majority of submissions requested that the ABS more clearly acknowledge, in the documented methodology, where underestimation is likely (for example for youth, people fleeing domestic and family violence, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people). Submissions also noted the ABS should clearly acknowledge, in its methodological documentation, that the Census does not collect data on, nor derive variables that directly report on, lifestyle, choice or preference; that these choices may impact on the concept and measurement of homelessness; but that these aspects are inferred through a number of other variables collected on the Census (such as home ownership or income).

Many submissions felt that the Review was too focussed on identifying the possible overestimates in the CTH methodology and was not sufficiently focussed on identifying possible underestimates including for the broad areas of youth, people fleeing domestic and family violence, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. A couple of submissions felt that the methodology should allow overestimation of some groups to compensate for the underestimation of other groups. This is in contrast to the Discussion Paper's argument that those groups which are overestimated are unlikely to have the same demographics, geographical locations or trend direction as those who have been underestimated, and that aggregate and explicit confidence bounds on broad estimates were more transparent than hidden but presumably offsetting errors in both directions. One submission put forward a view that 'undercounting' can only be addressed in the enumeration stage of the Census and cannot be addressed in the estimation stage.

No submission put the view that the ABS should not produce homelessness estimates from the Census. Many commented that the Census was currently the best source on which to base a point-in-time estimate of homelessness in a comprehensive way.

One submission supported the removal of imputed records from the 'Persons in improvised dwellings, tents, sleeping out' category of homelessness where no one was actually enumerated there on Census night but records were imputed in the Census. No submissions disagreed with the removal of these records.

Many submissions noted that academics and experts in the field should evaluate the methodology underlying the reviewed estimates. As noted elsewhere in this Position Paper, the ABS is continuing to review the estimation methodology and has already identified changes that will need to be made. These changes and any other suggestions will be picked up in ABS work program that is taken to the new Homelessness Statistics Reference Group which has representation from academics and other experts.

One submission proposal, reiterated in several other submissions, was for the review period to be extended until the end of 2012 to allow sufficient time for the HSRG to convene and effectively contribute its advice to ABS before reviewed estimates for 2001 and 2006 and new estimates for 2011 are finalised. ABS has noted that it will receive ongoing advice from the HSRG and will receive, at any time, submissions or advice suggesting improvements to methodology. However, any suggestions that require active interrogation of 2011 Census records during processing to improve their use in final homelessness estimates would need to have been received and considered by the end of 2011 to be certain that any changes could be implemented in estimates for 2011. The 2011 estimates will be published as soon as possible after the second release of Census variables are available for analysis. A longer time frame is possible for proposals that involve only output variable analysis, and the methodology can still be investigated and improved after 2011 estimates are released in the second half of 2012. Such a process of ongoing review and improvement is likely to be sparked by users analysing the 2011 results, by other research, and by analysis of other new ABS homelessness datasets. The ABS will publish, in May 2012, an official estimation methodology, and recompile 2001 and 2006 estimates.

Several submissions also sought more information to explain and justify the differences between the CTH and Review methodologies.

### ***Improved enumeration***

Overall, the submissions recognised the importance of accurate enumeration of homeless people in the Census to improve the accuracy of homelessness statistics derived from this source. The ABS does implement strategies to maximise the enumeration of the homeless and other special interest groups in the Census, but looks forward to working further with homeless services and other stakeholders to further improve these efforts in future Censuses.

Submissions provided the following recommendations for improving the enumeration of homeless persons in the Census:

- the development of homeless-specific Census questions to directly capture homelessness, or any questions that may aid with the correct classification of those who are homeless;
- work further with the appropriate services to improve the enumeration of homeless people, including the correct reporting of no usual address. Of particular interest was further work to understand and enumerate key population groups such as Aboriginal

- and Torres Strait Islander people, youth, those fleeing domestic or family violence, and those from non-English speaking populations;
- contacting local councils and service providers (as proposed by ABS during consultation forums) to provide lists of legal, and where available, illegal boarding or rooming houses to improve the correct identification of boarding houses. One submission raised the challenge of collecting complete and up-to-date boarding or rooming house lists from local councils. The ABS sought such lists from state and territory departments for the 2011 Census (and some have already been provided), as well as from services during consultation on the review, and will consider further expanding the request for lists from local councils and services for the 2016 Census.

### ***Definition of homelessness***

On balance, the submission process has surfaced significant interest in a review of the definition of homelessness used in Australia, whether or not that review would confirm the continued use of a cultural definition (with or without adjustments to its current application), or lead to the development of a new definition. ABS will include this review in its work program and progress the issues through the new HSRG.

Many submissions argued that residents in transitional housing management units (or equivalent), which are included in both the CTH and the ABS reviewed estimates, should be retained in estimates of the homeless population, given that these residents do not have security of tenure.

Some submissions supported continuing to use the 'cultural definition of homelessness' as the framework in which to estimate homelessness within Australia. Some of these submissions argued that the cultural definition should be strictly adhered to, and stated a view that the ABS had altered the cultural definition of homelessness, in particular by expanding the recognised exceptions to the definition.

Some submissions called for the definition of homelessness to be reviewed, and that a review be informed by international examples of definitions.

One submission from a service provider argued that people living in boarding houses should not be included in the definition of homeless, as their inclusion in homelessness estimates dilutes the literal meaning of being 'home-less' and that the continued inclusion of boarding houses fails to recognise changes in the standards of residential accommodation.

Some submissions requested that the tertiary homeless category be expanded to include usual residents in caravan parks. This group is excluded from the CTH definition of homelessness but reported separately as a marginally housed group. Others would like to see the scope of the marginally housed group expanded to incorporate new population groups.

### ***Supported accommodation for the homeless***

There was general support for the approach adopted by the ABS in the reviewed estimates of using Census data to report on homeless persons staying in supported accommodation for the homeless (previously known as SAAP). To maintain that approach, there was strong support for the existing 'list' and 'green sticker' strategies to be continued. The submissions also urged the ABS to continue to confront the Census data with the data generated from administrative systems on the use of supported accommodation for the homeless, as collected by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

The ABS had noted during consultation that it understood that hotels and caravan parks used by crisis support services, via brokerage, to provide crisis accommodation were not captured in former administrative data on people accommodated in SAAP on Census night, and that the Census offered opportunities to report these people within a supported accommodation category of homelessness. ABS will undertake further research on possible data sources and estimation methods for 2001 and 2006 estimates, and consult on the outputs from the new AIHW Specialist Homeless Services that may support estimation for 2011 and future Census cycles.

### ***New category – 'Persons staying in other temporary lodgings'***

There was widespread support for the creation of the new category in the reviewed estimates of 'Persons staying in other temporary lodgings' which reclassified these people from the CTH Boarding house category (tertiary homeless population). These people were reported in the Census without a usual address and were staying in public hospitals, private hospitals, hostels for the disabled etc. There was one request to expand this new category to include persons who were in correctional facilities.

One submission argued that this new group should be included under secondary homelessness rather than tertiary homelessness.

Some submissions argued for people for whom no usual address was reported and who were staying in caravan parks on Census night to also be included in the new 'Persons staying in other temporary lodgings' category. These people are currently classified as staying with other households.

### ***Boarding houses***

Several submissions argued that the rules applied to classify dwellings as boarding houses risk missing homeless students, particularly international students.

A few submissions argued that the CTH criterion, which uses the number of unrelated adults (5 or more) as a first step in determining whether a property enumerated in the Census as a private dwelling should be reclassified as a boarding house, should be revised down to 4 or more persons to align with the definition in the Victorian Residential Tenancies Act 1997, which provides for "a building in which there is one or more rooms available for occupancy on payment of rent..." and in which "... the total number of people who may occupy those rooms is not less than 4..."

The rule of 5 or more, used in part in **Counting the Homeless** methodology to reclassify as boarding houses those properties that were enumerated as private dwellings, was adopted because the private dwellings with fewer unrelated usual residents were most likely to be share houses (CTH 2008). If the property has been enumerated as a private dwelling, the Census variables cannot directly identify whether any person is renting a room only (which is a critical part of the legal definition of a rooming house in Victoria). If the dwelling was enumerated as a non-private dwelling such as a boarding house, but with less than 5 usual residents, it would be in scope of the boarding house population.

One submission argued that where a property has been enumerated as a private dwelling and the usual residents of that dwelling reported that they rented the dwelling from a parent or relative of one of the usual residents, that property may nevertheless actually be a boarding house and therefore the usual residents may actually be homeless. The review concluded that while this is a possible situation, it is much more likely that the Census collector correctly enumerated the property as a private residence.

A number of submissions advised that boarding or rooming houses are often managed by real estate agents. One service provider submission estimated that in their catchment area, 20% of boarding houses were managed by real estate agents (although it was not clear to ABS if these properties were clearly boarding houses that might be enumerated as such by a Census collector, or would present as a private dwelling and be enumerated as such). The submission therefore argued that it was possible for properties that were enumerated as private dwellings and paying rent to a real estate agent to actually be boarding houses, and the reviewed estimates should consider these properties if the other new rules adopted for the 2006 CTH applied. There were less than 400 people Australia-wide in the CTH boarding house estimates of persons enumerated in private dwellings for the reason that they were renting from real estate agents. Over 85% of these people were in 4 bedroom (50%) or 5 bedroom (35%) properties. The review criterion appears to appropriately distinguish these properties, enumerated as private dwellings with usual residents, as most likely to be share houses rather than a boarding house, although it is possible that some may be boarding houses. Further research and reporting through the HSRG will be undertaken to refine this analysis further.

The rules used to estimate the homeless population in boarding houses are the most complex within the CTH methodology. The reviewed estimates have made the application of some of the rules more consistent, and also looked in more detail to test the assumptions in that methodology. However, as noted in the **Discussion Paper**, ABS had not been able to test the veracity of all of the dwellings classified by the Census collectors as boarding houses and which were included in the CTH estimates. In this context, several submissions queried the 902 homeless youth aged 12 to 18 years that remain in the reviewed estimates as staying in boarding houses in comparison to other homeless groups. ABS has examined some of the properties that housed these youth on Census night and concluded that some at least are not boarding houses but are lodgings for secondary school students studying away from home e.g. the dwellings contain only secondary school aged youth who are attending secondary school, and adults who are child care workers. The ABS will continue its analysis and take its findings for refining the rules for identifying boarding houses to the HSRG.

As noted above under **Definition of homelessness**, one submission from a service provider argued that persons in boarding houses should not be included in the definition of homeless. Similarly, as noted under **Improved enumeration**, some submissions referred to improving lists of boarding houses.

### **Natural disaster areas**

Some submissions highlighted the need to consider how the recent disaster events (floods, fires and cyclones) will be considered in the 2011 estimates. A number of submissions have raised concerns as to whether the rules applied to identifying homeless people in improvised dwellings will exclude those living in temporary housing as a result of recent disaster events.

One submission suggested that this group should be reported on separately to understand both the impact of natural disasters on overall homeless figures, and the changes/ trends in relation to areas not affected by natural disasters.

The ABS is developing a strategy to analyse and report on homelessness in areas affected by recent disaster events which it will take to the HSRG.

### **Youth**

The Discussion Paper noted that ABS had not been able to establish any reliable way of estimating homelessness among youth staying with other households and for whom a usual

address is reported. This has been the greatest area of concern raised in both the consultations and the submissions. The submissions indicated that the low number of homeless youth staying with other households did not concord with their knowledge about youth homelessness, especially when comparing the numbers 'couch surfing' to the relatively high estimate of youth in boarding houses (although, as noted above under **Boarding Houses**, that estimate has been inflated by the inclusion of school students boarding away from home in special accommodation for that purpose).

The consultation since the publication of the Discussion Paper has not identified any new data source or estimation method to address this acknowledged underestimation for youth homelessness. The ABS is therefore developing a small and targeted quality study of homeless school students after the 2011 Census to help understand the possible level of homelessness, and in particular, inform on how this is manifested in Census reporting. If successful, the study will also scope a possible methodology for a more frequent nationally representative survey of homeless school students, subject to the ABS obtaining funding to run such a survey.

Many submissions welcomed the quality study into school student homelessness, while others felt that it would not be sufficient to understand the extent of youth who were homeless on Census night but for whom a usual address was reported. One submission supported the quality study proposal but recommended expanding it to other education institutions such as Technical and Further Education, Higher Education, Adult Community Education, as well as to Apprentices and employment services. These institutions are not in scope of the planned 2011 quality study but will be considered as part of longer term work program planning.

A number of submissions requested that Chamberlain and MacKenzie's National Census of School Students (NCHSS) be reinstated, or that a similar survey be conducted to understand the level of underestimation of young homeless people. The ABS understands that the NCHSS was conducted by Professors Chris Chamberlain and David MacKenzie at the same time as the 2001 and 2006 Censuses, as part of their **Counting the Homeless** methodology. However, it has never been connected to, nor is it part of, the official Census of Population and Housing. The ABS has not had any role in the funding, design, development or conduct of the NCHSS.

The ABS has concluded that the nature of the estimates reported from the NCHSS have a number of significant flaws that preclude their use in addressing the underestimation of youth homelessness from the Census: the NCHSS is based on school reports which capture youth homelessness over a week rather than on Census night; it uses an undercount adjustment methodology that is inconsistent between Censuses; and, it applies an extrapolation to the non-school youth population that is both inconsistent with the stated methodology and which overstates the estimate.

One submission supported the decision of the ABS not to utilise the NCHSS estimates but encouraged the ABS to further consider the 12-18 year age group reviewed estimates, and if there is further evidence available, refine the reporting on the scale of the possible underestimation. This work will be taken to the HSRG.

Several submissions referred to the definition of 'youth', noting that the youth services population can be 12-24 years old or 12-25 years old. While the Discussion Paper adopted the CTH definition of 'youth', it also reported on the 19-24 year age group. The wider 12-24 year age group are reported alongside estimates of 12–18 year olds in the Key Issues section on youth.

Many submissions supported the commitment that the ABS made at the discussion forums

to analyse in more depth the 40,000 youth who were visiting on Census night and for whom a usual address is reported. This analysis was to help understand whether there were likely subgroups of visitors where the 'hidden' homeless youth might be most likely to be included. The ABS has commenced this analysis, some of which will be presented in the second edition of this Paper on 5 August 2011. The ABS will continue to undertake further analysis to take to the HSRG for discussion. However, most submissions noted that the most likely opportunity to improve the estimation within the Census data was through improved enumeration, and ABS has been working with homeless services providers in each state and territory to encourage accurate reporting of 'no usual address' by all homeless people, including those who are couch surfing and young people.

### ***Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Peoples***

There was a general recognition in the submissions of the challenges associated with the enumeration and estimation of homeless Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This was highlighted in the Discussion Paper by the low proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were identified as homeless (i.e. no usual address) and staying with other households on Census night. Many submissions agreed with the Discussion Paper's articulation of Indigenous understanding of Census usual address questions and overcrowding as both potentially masking homelessness.

Recommendations from the submissions included further research to understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples homelessness and its capture within the Census, and the utilisation of experts in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian's homelessness to improve the enumeration and estimation of this population. ABS noted during consultation that it was planning focus group work among Indigenous communities on these issues, both to shed more light on the Census analysis but also to support development of culturally appropriate ABS homelessness modules for incorporation in ABS nationally representative Indigenous surveys. ABS research in this area will be taken to the HSRG.

### ***New migrants and culturally and linguistically diverse populations***

Many submissions did not agree with the assumptions that new migrants (those who had arrived in Australia some time in the 7 months before the Census and were not from countries from which they were likely to be entering Australia on humanitarian visas) were unlikely to be homeless and hence not included in the homeless estimates. The Discussion Paper noted that the largest group (around 450) of these new migrants were from the United Kingdom (UK) and most were in family groups, with about 30% of the UK new migrants being under 15 years of age. While about a third of the adults from the UK reported nil or negative personal income (potentially non-working spouses), another quarter reported personal incomes of \$1,000 or more per week. Overall, about 60% of all the adults were staying with other households reporting their household incomes of \$1,000 or more per week. The review had concluded that the reasons of mobility/change of address for reporting no usual address, according to the design and intent of the question, were more likely to apply, on average to these populations, than was homelessness for this group, even though some may have been homeless on Census night.

Submissions also noted that new migrants can have difficulty obtaining secure accommodation, and were particularly concerned about New Zealand migrants who do not require a visa to work in Australia. There were a little over 150 migrants from New Zealand (NZ) in this category under the review, and only about a sixth of the adults reported personal incomes of \$1,000 or more per week and over a quarter reported nil or negative income. However, in terms of the household incomes of the people these NZ visitors were staying with, 10% reported negative household incomes and 70% reported incomes of \$1,000 or more per week.

Some submissions also reported concern about migrants living in overcrowded and marginal housing.

A couple of submissions requested that the ABS recognise the multi-dimensions of homelessness in terms of the ethnicity of homeless people. While these groups are not discussed in detail in the Discussion Paper, estimates are presented by broad country of birth classification, and the data can also be analysed by Year of arrival, Ancestry, English proficiency, Country of birth of father and mother, and Main language other than English spoken at home. Future reporting of official estimates with a finalised methodology will include the richness that Census data can support.

### ***Marginal residents of caravan parks***

As noted above under the **Definition of Homelessness**, some submissions requested that marginal residents of caravan parks now be included as homeless. There were also requests for more research on the type and length of tenure of those living in caravan parks etc. to understand their circumstances, in order to better understand the strength of any argument to go beyond the CTH conclusion that there wasn't a widely accepted argument for treating them as homeless. Some additional data will be presented in the second edition of this paper.

One submission recommended the use of Tourism Australia data to understand marginal residents of caravan parks.

The ABS has undertaken some additional analysis of residents in caravan parks and will undertake further research to define and measure the marginally housed, and present these findings alongside the homeless estimates to the HSRG.

### ***Overcrowding***

Some submissions argued that overcrowding is a component of marginal housing that does not meet 'minimum expectations' of housing, and as such should be classified as homelessness. As noted above there were particular concerns that in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households overcrowding may mask homelessness, but it can also be an issue for student households and 'new migrant' households.

The ABS will work to define and report the overcrowded population in more detail, along with other marginally housed populations, and present these alongside estimates of homelessness. The HSRG will consider this issue as part of deliberations on a homelessness definition.

### ***Travellers, including Grey Nomads***

Many submissions were concerned that 'grey nomads' were not included in the review homeless population. Some submissions felt that the concept was ill defined and required more research and explanation to assist them to understand this population group. Some additional detail will be reported in the second edition of this paper.

There was broad concern that people who were aged 55 years and over, not employed nor looking for work, travelling with their spouse in a caravan that they own, and staying temporarily in caravan parks may be homeless and not be included in the reviewed homeless estimates as they cannot be distinguished from the 'grey nomads' who were excluded.

Services had reported an increase in older people, particularly women, requesting homelessness services.

Some of the submissions felt that living in a caravan was below culturally acceptable housing and therefore they should be treated as homeless if they reported they had no usual address.

One submission argued that while many 'grey nomads' reported a usual address elsewhere 12 months earlier, and the review had taken this as some evidence to support the anecdotal and tourism reporting of 'grey nomads', this circumstance was inconsequential as to whether they are currently homeless because, for some, homelessness is episodic. Another submission suggested that equivalised income should be used in conjunction with these variables to attempt to identify those who are likely to be homeless. The ABS has identified those classified as 'grey nomads' often had no or low incomes similar to those on pensions, further analysis is presented in the Key Issues section on Travellers. The Census is unable to determine what their source of income is, or the level of their wealth and whether they may be living from their savings. There is anecdotal evidence that travellers seeing Australia are in their initial post-retirement period and travelling for long periods and therefore not having a usual address of six months or more.

The ABS will further analyse, and discuss with the HSRG, rules that may be able to be applied in classifying travellers, including 'grey nomads', that may better differentiate between groups of homeless people and travellers.

### ***Older homeless people***

As outlined above in the Travellers section, some submissions were concerned about older homeless people, particularly women, not been adequately estimated in the homeless methodology. They were concerned that 'grey nomads' was masking some of these people who were living in caravan parks.

### ***Improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out***

As outlined in the Discussion Paper, the ABS removed from this category imputed records, as well as those records where the ABS determined they were more likely to be construction workers, owner builders and/or hobby farmers. A couple of the submissions noted that the Census does not collect variables to directly determine the reasons as to why these households were in 'improvised dwellings....'. However the ABS used a number of Census variables to infer this. These variables included occupation, tenure type, employment status, mortgage payments, rent payments and household income. See the Key Issues section in this Paper for more information.

There was little comment in the submissions about removing imputed records. The ABS removed records from the 'Persons in improvised dwellings, tents, sleeping out' where no one was actually enumerated there on Census night but records were imputed for people assumed to live in that dwelling. One submission supported the removal of imputed records in the methodology.

A couple of submissions were concerned that the exclusions did not take account of those who were made homeless due to natural disasters. They may have similar characteristics to those who were identified as owner builders and/or hobby farmers (such as high mortgages on the land). Natural disaster areas will be treated separately by the ABS in analysing results from the 2011 Census (see the section on **Natural disasters areas** for more information).

There was a view from one submission that those who are living in improvised dwellings such as owner builders, hobby farmers and construction workers were still people who were living temporarily in marginal housing that is sub-standard, and removing them from the homeless population is not counting them as living in sub-standard housing. While the variables cannot determine whether all of this accommodation is sub-standard, the Census collector has determined that they are living in improvised dwellings.

One submission requested that if constructions workers, owner builders and hobby farmers were determined to be homeless after this review, that a separate category should be created in which to track them.

Another submission from a service provider supported the removal from the homeless estimate of people living in improvised dwellings for which there is reasonable evidence they are construction workers or if they had a mortgage on the property.

The ABS will continue to further refine the treatment and reporting of those identified as likely to be construction workers, owner builders and/or hobby farmers in 'improvised dwellings.....', considering the recommendations made through the submissions. Real time analysis of the circumstances of the properties during 2011 Census processing will be one improvement in classification that has not been applied in earlier Censuses.

### ***Domestic and Family Violence and Women's experience of homelessness***

A number of submissions discussed women's experiences of homelessness and/or domestic and family violence. One submission argued that the current treatment of homelessness is a male view of homelessness and does not take account of women's homelessness, such as sleeping in their car, or partnering for the night with sex to avoid being on the streets or staying with a violent partner. Some submissions acknowledged the difficulties, raised in the Discussion Paper, in classifying through the Census women and children who are staying with friends or relatives as a result of domestic and family violence but who report a place of usual address, despite not being able to return to that address.

The submissions and the ABS recognise the difficulties both of enumerating and of classifying in the Census output, people who are fleeing domestic and/or family violence. Out of fear, they may not have themselves recorded on a Census form for the dwelling they are staying in, or alternatively they may be recorded as having been at home when they were not actually there, but were staying somewhere else on Census night. For those who are reported on a Census form, they may be reluctant, for a number of reasons including stigma, to report having no usual address on Census night. Alternatively, they may have an expectation that they may be able to return to their home in the future and do not see themselves as not having a usual address.

The advice during consultation was not to assume that women who are fleeing violence are only those with low incomes, and the submissions recommended working with experts to understand further the circumstances of those fleeing violence, and look to ways to improve the enumeration of these people to get a more accurate Census based count of this population. The submissions also urged the ABS to look further into the data to identify whether any more of these women, although reporting a usual address in the Census, can be reasonably classified as likely to be homeless. To date, no rules have been established that could distinguish between women reporting a usual address and who were homeless due to violence, and those women who were visiting other households for social or other reasons such as on holiday on Census night.

### ***Other data sources***

There was wide support provided during consultation for additional data sources to be used to understand aspects of the homeless population, and to use them to also better understand the Census data. The data sources mentioned included the ABS General Social Survey (and other ABS surveys that will also include a homelessness module) and the new Centrelink flags for homelessness and at risk of homelessness. The submissions advised that these other sources all have their specific limitations for homelessness measurement, just as the Census does, and these should be clearly acknowledged both in analysis and reporting.

Some submissions made further recommendations for additional data sources that might be used. Examples included using hospital data (to understand both the risk of homelessness, and homeless status prior to admission and on exit from hospitals), Reconnect data, Tourism Australia data and local government or service level data on clients and locations of boarding houses. The ABS will follow up these opportunities as part of its ongoing homelessness measurement work program.

### ***Other areas for further analysis***

Some submissions requested that seasonal workers and students should be researched further, due to a concern that there were homeless populations in these groups that may not be adequately captured in current sources and analysis.

One submission highlighted the importance of the interactions between disability and homelessness. While the Census collects data on needs for assistance, this submission felt that this question was insufficient to understand these interactions as it doesn't capture severity or type of disability. The 2010 ABS General Social Survey will provide data on both previous experiences of homelessness and disability status, and future ABS Surveys of Disability, Ageing and Carers will consider incorporating questions on prior experiences of homelessness.

One submission requested a clearer presentation of the differences between the CTH methodology and the reviewed estimate. The Discussion Paper presented both textual discussion of the differences and decision rule trees in an Appendix, but did not clearly show the significance and impact of all of the criteria, such as when 'No usual address' is employed, nor the treatment of some subpopulations (especially children). The submission argued for more consistency with the treatment of 'not-stated' values such as when the dwelling type is not stated, and consistency in treatment of mortgage payments and rent payments, the income thresholds applied and the different employment and student status. The Appendix in this Position Paper presents the information in a different way to improve interpretability of the differences, and ABS will further review rules used in estimation. However some rules are applied for different purposes in different circumstances - for example a higher threshold for mortgage payments is applied when looking at improvised dwellings to better distinguish those who are likely to be owner builders in transition while they build.

Two submissions recommended the use of equivalised household income, instead of household income in the decision rules using income.

### **Outcomes from the submissions**

Following consultation the ABS has determined that it will:

- utilise the expertise of the homelessness services sector, both bilaterally and through the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group (HSRG), to understand and improve reporting on the characteristics of key homelessness population groups;

- seek input into an exploration of the definition of homelessness, for initial discussion with the HSRG;
- continue to articulate and acknowledge possible underestimation, including in the final methodology used for 2011 Census reporting.
- ensure, through the HSRG, that the explanation of the final methodology for 2011 Census results (and backcasting), and the reasons behind the rules to be applied, are transparent (including for the boarding house classification);
- continue the current enumeration and estimation approaches for persons staying in supported accommodation for the homeless (previously known as SAAP) on Census night;
- retain and report on the homeless category for 'Persons in other temporary lodgings';
- consider the recommendations for improving the enumeration of homeless populations as part of the development of the 2016 Census, and work further with the homelessness services sector in implementation;
- undertake a quality study of homeless school students after the 2011 Census to provide insight into the likely underestimation of homeless youth using current methodologies. If the quality study methodology proves successful, the ABS would seek funding to run a homeless school student survey on a regular basis;
- continue analysis of the 40,000 youth who were visitors on Census night and for whom a usual address is reported, and identify whether any subpopulation of this group are more likely than others, on average, to include youth who were possibly homeless on Census night;
- continue working with homeless service providers in each state and territory to encourage accurate reporting of 'no usual address' by all homeless people, including those who are 'couch surfing';
- work further on the analysis of the currently classified boarding house population regarding both overestimation and underestimation, for review through the HSRG;
- for the 2016 Census, investigate local council and other sources for boarding house lists;
- redefine marginal residents of caravan parks, as part of the marginally housed populations, and present these alongside estimates of homelessness;
- reanalyse the reviewed estimates for travellers, including 'grey nomads' to assess whether any refinement is required; and
- review consistency in classification rule for different homeless groups to understand if any changes are appropriate.

## NEXT STEPS IN CONSULTATION

The timetable below presents a broad outline of the process of consultation and refinement of the methodology:

### TIMETABLE

31 March 2011	<b>Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006</b> (ABS cat. no. 2050.0.55.001) released
April - June 2011	Consultation period
April - May 2011	Discussion forums held in each capital city
2 August 2011	<b>Position Paper: ABS Review of Counting the Homeless Methodology</b> (ABS cat. no. 2050.0.55.002) released
9 August 2011	Census night
August 2011 onwards	Commencement of Homelessness Statistics Reference Group (HSRG) Working with HSRG and other key stakeholders to develop final methodology
Late 2011	Finalise methodology in regard to input processing for the 2011 Census
May 2012	Publish official output estimation methodology, and recompile 2001 and 2006 estimates
Late 2012	Publish 2011 estimates

## Complexities in estimating homelessness

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### COMPLEXITIES IN ESTIMATING HOMELESSNESS

It is not easy to estimate the number of people who are homeless in Australia. Few countries in the world attempt the complex task of comprehensively estimating the number of homeless people in their population. The homeless population is small compared to the entire population, is spread over a wide geographical area and is often difficult to find during enumeration (and in fact some may not wish to be found). Consequently, people who are homeless are difficult to capture in a statistical collection.

Homelessness can result from such a diversity of reasons that anyone in society can potentially experience homelessness at some stage in their lives. This compounds the difficulties in measuring the homeless population because it can be difficult to identify unique characteristics of this population in order to identify them, amongst all people in the community, at the time that they are experiencing homelessness. Even if the homeless population is included in a statistically representative data collection, classifying them as homeless in output remains a challenge because not only are people's experiences of homelessness varied and complex in nature, often they may not identify themselves as being homeless.

For both enumeration and classification reasons, the homeless population is probably one of the hardest populations to enumerate and understand in a statistically representative way.

Being homeless may mean that some people are not captured at all in datasets used to count people generally. This includes the Census of Population and Housing, which is the most comprehensive enumeration of the Australian population. Nor will all homeless people be necessarily counted in datasets that count only those homeless people accessing particular homeless services, or those obtaining government benefits. Due to the difficulties in identification and collection, no existing measures of homelessness are precise.

There are many different aspects of homelessness that are of interest to understand the number of homeless people and their characteristics. For example, the need to count everyone in the Australian population, including those who are homeless, is important so that services and funding can be appropriately distributed across the Australian population. It is also important to appropriately classify the homeless population to provide understanding of the characteristics of those who are amongst the most disadvantaged in Australia. The reasons for understanding homelessness may affect the kind of estimate which is needed. Different dimensions include, but are not limited to, prevalence or point-in-time estimates, incidence or numbers experiencing homelessness over time, characteristics of those who are homeless, transitions into and out of homelessness, and the length of typical experiences of homelessness. Some of these are discussed below.

### KEY DIMENSIONS OF HOMELESSNESS

#### Prevalence

A fundamental estimate of homelessness is prevalence. Prevalence is an estimate of how many people experienced homelessness at a particular point-in-time. A prevalence estimate should ensure that each person is included only once in the estimate if they were homeless at a particular point in time. An accurate measure of the prevalence of homelessness allows society to judge the scale of the problem. If prevalence measures can be estimated on a consistent, comparable basis and at regular intervals, then trends and the direction of change can be determined. This allows monitoring of the numbers of those who were homeless, and can be used to identify if interventions or policies have been successful. It allows society to hold itself and governments accountable for some outcomes at this broad level.

As importantly, if policy and program action is to target preventing, or ameliorating the circumstances of homelessness, knowing the locations of the homeless, and their characteristics, is necessary for effective targeting. Such knowledge also allows monitoring of the outcomes of programs to identify what interventions are successful. Ideally, fine geographic level prevalence measures allow consideration of where homeless people are located for place based targeting of services and other interventions. The characteristics of the homeless population, such as sex, age, whether of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin, or the identification of subpopulations such as those who are in primary or secondary homeless situations are also valuable delineations of a point-in-time measure for interventions tailored to client needs.

## **Incidence**

A second measure of homelessness is an estimate of the number of people experiencing at least one period of homelessness over a given period of time, for example, over a 12 month period. This is a flow measure and is sometimes referred to as an incidence measure. Incidence measures have value in informing service provision by showing the potential demand for services over a given period.

Incidence measures show all experiences of homelessness over a period, and may include multiple incidences of homelessness for some individuals. It is difficult to find a collection vehicle to count these phenomena in real time. Counts of those who access services is one option, however these incidence measures are constrained to the services available, and to their population of service users. People's recall of their experiences is another approach, but recall accuracy can be an issue, especially for repeat periods of homelessness.

## **Individuals' experiences of homelessness**

Data on the typical length of an experience of homelessness, along with the type of homelessness experienced and where the person stayed while homeless, are all important. An estimate of the number of experiences of homelessness per person over a given period of time also increases understanding of movements into, and out of, homelessness. Critical to the analysis of such experience data is the ability to identify sub-populations and the characteristics of persons with particular experiences. This enables services to be developed and targeted to certain types of homeless experiences.

Obtaining extra information on the events that both trigger how a person becomes homeless, and how they move out of it, and potentially back again, are also important. This helps to develop programs to intervene before a person reaches the point where they become homeless (or homeless again) and to intervene to support their movement out from a state of homelessness. The characteristics of people, including identifying the types of people who may be at risk, and the events that might trigger homelessness, are important data items to make this information useful for policy and program planning.

## POTENTIAL DATA SOURCES

Potential data sources for estimating the different aspects of homelessness that have been identified include: the Census of Population and Housing; administrative data from service provider collections; the homelessness flags on Centrelink records; ABS household surveys such as the General Social Survey, Personal Safety Survey, etc; and longitudinal data sources including the 5% Statistical Longitudinal Census Dataset and the longitudinal study **Journeys home - Longitudinal Study of Factors Affecting Housing Stability**. The potential for, and limitations of, these sources to enhance statistical understanding of homelessness are discussed below.

In addition to data sources that can present a statistically representative picture of the homeless population and allow comparison to the total population, individual qualitative studies (including case studies) are important to understand homelessness in more depth. They can provide the histories of those who have been homeless, and attempt to understand, for some individuals, what interventions work. They are also important to understand the key factors that statistically representative surveys should focus on. Both quantitative and qualitative research are important in understanding the broad spectrum of issues relating to homelessness.

### Census of Population and Housing

The Census of Population and Housing (conducted by the ABS on a five-yearly basis) provides the best opportunity for a point-in-time or prevalence estimate of homelessness that can be used in trend estimation.

The power of the Census in estimating homelessness is that the Census aims to count all persons in Australia on Census night (with the exception of foreign diplomats and their families). It includes those people who are in conventional private dwellings but also those in non-private dwellings or those who were not in a dwelling at all on Census night. As a result, aside from the challenges of enumerating them on Census night, persons who are homeless are in scope of being counted in the Census. The Census also collects detailed information about people such as those who have a need for assistance, those born overseas, and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people. With data available at a very fine geographic level, the Census also provides the potential for estimates of homelessness to be calculated for most geographic areas.

Some submissions to the review noted that the net undercount in the 2006 Census was estimated by the ABS at 549,486 people, and that homeless people are likely to be over represented in that net undercount. This could imply a significant underestimate of the homeless population that is based on the Census results. Any such undercount would impact on the reviewed estimates of homelessness, other than for those people enumerated in SAAP properties, i.e. it would impact on the accuracy of the estimate of 17,000 or so homeless people in boarding houses, the 2,000 in other non-private dwellings, the 8,000 in improvised dwellings and the 20,000 in other private dwellings.

The quality of the Census data is further enhanced by using information collected in a post-enumeration survey (PES) to obtain estimates of the net undercount in the Census. The PES is conducted immediately following the Census. While the PES collects information representative of the vast majority of Australians, it is not designed to estimate the undercount of persons who may be homeless (as it does not cover all people, such as those who live in special dwellings such as boarding houses, or those who are not living in private dwellings at the time of the PES). It does, however, provide information about the

characteristics of people who may have been missed in the Census. It will include some people who were homeless on Census night but were not homeless during the PES, or those who were staying in a private dwelling on Census night such as those people staying with other households.

There were 6,276 people enumerated in the 2006 PES and for whom a Census record was not found (ABS 2007a, Table 4.1). Some 97% of these respondents to the PES were usual residents of their PES address. Only 3% were visitors at the time of the PES. Of the 4,796 PES respondents who thought that they had been counted in the Census three weeks earlier, about three-quarters thought that they would have been counted at their PES address i.e. at home. They were not visitors to that address at either the time of the Census nor at the time of the PES. For these people with a common usual address at both the Census and the PES, the reasons for them being missed during the Census are not known. Common reasons include simple error on the part of householders completing the form (e.g. assuming the person is being enumerated elsewhere because they were away from home on Census night, or being accidentally left off the Census form). If they were in a specialist homeless services dwelling at the time of the Census and have since returned home, they would have been included in the SAAP component of homelessness in the Census dataset. If they had been in a boarding house at the time of the Census and were missed in a boarding house on Census night, their usual address elsewhere in Australia (their PES address) would have meant they would need to be excluded from any homeless estimate.

The other 25% of this group of 4,796 PES respondents who thought they had been counted (but in fact wasn't) nominated another address where they thought they were enumerated in the Census. About 50% of these people (546) nominated a Census night dwelling address that was missed by Census collectors i.e. they were not people who chose not to participate, nor were they in dwellings that the Census collectors could not make contact with. They were in dwellings that the Census collector simply missed and their omission from the Census enumeration has no impact on homelessness estimates.

While 97% of PES respondents reported their PES address as their usual address, and most of those reported that it was also their Census night address, there may be some people enumerated in the PES who were not counted in the Census because they were temporarily absent and homeless at the time of the Census, but had returned home in the three weeks since the Census. Such circumstances may include youth or people escaping domestic violence and staying temporarily with other households on Census night but not being recorded on the Census form for that household.

And as the PES does not approach non-private dwellings (nor people sleeping out) it does not generate direct estimates of undercount for people in those circumstances at the time of the PES. However, the final undercount estimates are weighted to account for the entire population, including those people in non-private dwellings and also includes people who were not in dwellings.

While there is so much value from the Census in creating prevalence estimates of homelessness, it does have some limitations. It is not possible to ascertain homelessness from a direct Census question, so instead, to use Census data to identify the size and characteristics of the homeless population, it is necessary to create decision rules to infer whether persons enumerated are, on balance, likely to be homeless. This means that the Census can only be used to create estimates of the number of persons who may be homeless, not measure this characteristic directly.

In the methodologies used to estimate homelessness, the data items available from the Census may not support the assumptions being made when interpreting the data, for three possible reasons:

- they do not adequately characterise homelessness (for example employment or education status); and/or
- the underlying questions have not been designed for the purpose of homeless identification (for example, the usual address question); and/or
- because the characteristics may be poorly reported (for example, a person reported a usual address when they do not in fact have one).

While none or not all these reasons apply to each characteristic or assumption, overall they mean that the measurement of homelessness from the Census may overestimate or underestimate the number of people classified in the Census dataset as homeless on Census night.

Underestimation is likely to be greater for population groups, such as for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Australians, which have experienced relatively high rates of undercount in previous Censuses. In addition, Indigenous Australians may report a usual address that is culturally associated with a place rather than with an adequate shelter (see Chapter 7 of the Discussion Paper and the Key Issues section of this Position Paper). Undercount in the Census is also more likely for people (including Indigenous Australians) staying in dwellings, such as public housing, without any legal right to occupy the premises. The completed Census form for such dwellings may simply show the tenants, and not any of their friends or family who may be staying on Census night.

Youth are also likely to be underestimated in the homeless population. For youth, such as 'couch surfers', to be classified as homeless in the Census, reporting 'no usual address' on the Census form is critically important. For youth who are homeless and staying with another family, this question may be incorrectly completed because the member of the family they are staying with may report the youth's previous address on the Census form as their 'usual' address. This may be because they do not know that the youth can not return to this address. Alternatively some youth may not admit to having no usual address as they do not want the stigma attached to being 'homeless'.

Underestimation is also likely for victims of domestic violence who, at the time of the Census, may assume they still have, and therefore report, the usual address from which they have fled. For others, they may not report themselves on the Census form out of fear that their location will be identified. However, people who are escaping domestic and/or family violence will be identified as homeless if they are staying in crisis accommodation, or in boarding houses if they report that dwelling as their usual residence, while a significant proportion staying temporarily with another household or in boarding houses may not be classified as homeless because they report a usual address elsewhere.

Overall, estimating homelessness from the Census is through identifying those who are most likely to be homeless on Census night based on a number of characteristics. These estimates cannot include those people who were not enumerated in the Census, because, other than the PES, there is no estimate of the numbers who were not enumerated.

The ABS is focussed on improving enumeration in the 2011 Census for a number of key population groups including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, migrants, fly-in/fly-out workers, the homeless and those who will not be home on Census night. This is not only to ensure that the Census comprehensively covers the whole Australian population, but also to improve estimation of key population groups such as the homeless or Indigenous people. The ABS will achieve this through a range of special enumeration strategies. Seeking improved enumeration is the focus for new or improved methods for the future, and planned actions are noted and recommendations for further improvement are made in Future Directions section.

Several countries undertake rough sleeper census counts, crisis accommodation census counts and/or utilise administrative data to capture these aspects of homelessness on their Census night. However, no other country currently attempts a prevalence measure across all aspects of homelessness. Some countries only undertake a Census every 10 years, and/or do not ask a usual address question, therefore limiting the usefulness of the Census to undertake further homelessness analysis. Professors Chamberlain and MacKenzie were groundbreaking in researching whether the Australian Census could provide insight into estimating the broader homeless population on Census night.

Through the methodological review, the ABS has concluded that the **Counting the Homeless** estimates did not satisfy the requirements for measuring prevalence or trends over time, but that through testing and refining the estimation methods, the ABS has confidence the Census can provide trend analysis of the size and characteristics of the homeless population on Census night. It is not yet clear how close such Census based estimates are likely to be to the true measure of homelessness in the population at that point in time, and ABS will work further with stakeholders to refine the measures for that purpose. However, applying a consistent methodology helps to understand change over time in the numbers of those who are homeless, even if it cannot estimate the exact size of the population.

### **SAAP National Data Collection (until 30 June 2011)**

Until the end of June 2011, the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program National Data Collection (SAAP NDC) was the main source of data on the provision of services through the SAAP program. Until recently, three components to this collection existed: the Client Collection, the Administrative Data Collection and the Demand for Accommodation Collection. SAAP funding covered both supported accommodation and related support services, so data from the collection covered the number of services provided to people experiencing homelessness or being at risk of experiencing homelessness, and these were presented as support periods and as accommodation support periods. Data from the Client collection can be used to generate estimates of the number of people experiencing at least one period of SAAP support for a given period of time (see the Key Issue section of this Position Paper for more information).

The collection provided further detail about the characteristics of clients (and accompanying children) who received SAAP services. The data enhanced understanding of the characteristics of people who sought homeless services and who gain access to these services. Some data items include the type of support received, reasons for clients seeking assistance, circumstances of clients before and after support and the collection can show changes in support provided over time (AIHW, 2011).

It may be difficult to extrapolate service provider data such as that from the SAAP NDC to make statements about the underlying homeless population. For example, if a service reported a doubling of accommodation services provided within a time period, this may mean that the actual homeless population had doubled or that the population accessing accommodation has doubled through increased accommodation being provided, or through an increased knowledge of the services available. Instead, the value of service provider data is in reporting about service usage and about the characteristics of those accessing the services. It is important to remember that the characteristics of those seeking and/or accessing services may differ from the characteristics of those who did not.

SAAP NDC data provided support period data, or flow data, not point-in-time data so it is not useful to match or augment the Census point-in-time prevalence estimates. Separate SAAP data were collected and compiled in relation to accommodation provided on Census night

for use is assessing the quality of Census data on people enumerated in SAAP dwellings on Census night.

The SAAP client collection provides data about the number of active accommodation support periods at a point-in-time (eg. on Census night), as well as the characteristics of those accessing the services. The data were usually collected in May and September. However, this collection was moved to August in Census years to provide a point-in-time estimate of the number of active accommodation support periods and has been used to verify Census SAAP estimates as mentioned in the previous paragraph and as discussed in **Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006** (ABS cat. no. 2050.0.55.001). These data are useful alongside the Census point in time estimates for providing a richer picture of homelessness for these service users.

### **Specialist Homeless Services (SHS)**

The SAAP collection has been replaced by a new collection - Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) collection that commenced on 1 July 2011. AIHW will compile the data, the first of which will become available in 2012. This Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) data collection will provide data about the pathways people take in and out of homelessness and the kinds of work homelessness agencies do. It will be able to identify individual clients as well as support periods and children will be counted as individual clients. In addition, family information will be more accurate. Information about previous episodes of homelessness and people turned away from homelessness agencies will also be available. The data will be able to provide snapshots of homelessness at a given point in time, which was not previously available with the past datasets (AIHW 2011).

### **Centrelink 'vulnerability to homelessness flag'**

Centrelink have included homelessness 'flags' in their system which help customer service officers provide appropriate services to people experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness. Data produced using these indicators may provide useful information about those who are identified by Centrelink as homeless. It may be possible to analyse this population against other data items held by Centrelink to provide a picture of the characteristics of the homeless population in receipt of Centrelink benefits (FaHCSIA 2010).

The flags have been implemented to inform Centrelink staff that the client needs active follow up to ensure that they are receiving the support they need and are able to meet any obligations arising from their income support payment. It will also be used by Centrelink to change business practices to better meet the needs of such vulnerable clients. The flag is not designed to be a measure of all people on the Centrelink database who are either experiencing or are at risk of homelessness, but rather it shows those who have been identified as being in this group through client/service interaction. Data extracted using this indicator may be biased towards areas where Centrelink staff have been better trained or are more proactive in identifying and using the indicator. In addition, the indicator will not cover the entire homeless population as there will be some homeless people who will not be on the Centrelink database and some Centrelink customers who are not in enough contact with Centrelink to be identified as relevant for the flag to be applied.

While the flag may not provide an estimate of the absolute number of people who might be homeless, it may be able to provide an indication of movement in homelessness, as well as the characteristics of those people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

### **ABS 2010 General Social Survey**

The ABS 2010 General Social Survey included a new homelessness module. The survey

interviews one randomly selected adult per household and collects information about the respondent's socio-demographics including income, wealth, social participation measures, employment, education, problems accessing services etc. The new homelessness module will be able to identify previous experiences of homelessness and provide insight into the homelessness experience of the population. This module included whether the person had a period of time without a permanent place to live, and if so, whether they had been accommodated in a range of circumstances (eg. night shelter, with friends or relatives, slept rough etc). The survey also collects data on what led to the homeless circumstance, and the frequency with which they have experienced homelessness. For the most recent experience of homelessness, data are collected on when that homeless experience occurred, for how long, and whether services were approached for assistance, what assistance was provided (if applicable) or why services were not approached.

The GSS only collects information from people who are in private dwellings. The survey does not approach people who live in non-private dwellings such as boarding houses, or those who are not in dwellings at all. Therefore it cannot inform on current homeless experiences.

The data about previous experiences of homelessness can be cross-classified with all of the other social capital variables collected in the GSS. This includes their income, wealth, feelings of safety, experiences of violence, contact with friends and relatives, problems accessing services etc.

GSS data are expected to inform on the flows through homeless periods in the 12 months prior to the survey, in the two years prior and in the five years prior. ABS will be publishing data from the 2010 General Social Survey in late September 2011.

The next General Social Survey, to be run in 2014, will also include an enhanced homelessness module to enable comparisons with 2010 of previous experiences of homelessness.

## **Other ABS Surveys**

The ABS proposes to consider the inclusion of a GSS-like homelessness module in other future ABS surveys, as appropriate, such as the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, the Survey of Income and Housing and/or the Household Expenditure Survey.

The ABS will also investigate the development of a culturally appropriate module on the previous experiences of homelessness for the 2014 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey.

## **Personal Safety Survey 2012**

The ABS is testing questions for potential inclusion in the Personal Safety Survey (PSS) 2012. These could cover information about a person's housing arrangements the last time they separated from a violent current partner and their housing arrangements at the end of their last violent previous partner relationship. The ABS is proposing to seek information from respondents who have experienced current partner violence to establish, whether they have ever separated from their violent current partner and had to leave their home, and if so, where they went the last time they separated. The ABS is also seeking to establish from respondents who experienced violence from a previous partner, when they left their last violent previous partner, whether they had to leave their home, and if so, where they went when the relationship finally ended. For example whether they stayed with a friend or relative, slept rough, stayed in a refuge or shelter, stayed in temporary accommodation eg. motel etc or elsewhere. If they went to multiple places, we ask them for the place in which

they spent the most time.

While not a complete picture of where people went every time they separated during all relationships, if the testing is successful, this will provide an indication of what accommodation was used by people the last time they separated from their violent partner/s.

### **Journeys home: Longitudinal Study of Factors Affecting Housing Stability**

As part of the National Homelessness Research Agenda, FaHCSIA is funding **Journeys Home: Longitudinal Study of Factors Affecting Housing Stability**, the first large-scale longitudinal study following the lives of 1,550 Australians who are homeless or who may be vulnerable to homelessness. Participants will be interviewed every six months over two years and the results of the study will assist in understanding the various factors associated with homelessness and housing stability.

### **A 5% Statistical Longitudinal Census Dataset (SLCD)**

The ABS is planning to create a Statistical Longitudinal Census Dataset (SLCD) by bringing together data from the 2006 Census with data from the 2011 Census and future Censuses to build a picture of how society moves through various changes: which groups are affected by different types of change and in what way. The 2006 SLCD dataset and the 2011 Census dataset will be brought together using a statistical method referred to as 'probabilistic record linkage'. This involves bringing together data from the two datasets without using names and addresses but by using a number of characteristics common to both datasets such as age, sex, geographic region and country of birth (for more information see **Census Data Enhancement Project: An Update, Oct 2010**, ABS cat. no. 2062.0).

The ABS will investigate using the 5% SLCD to undertake longitudinal analysis of the circumstances of those who have been identified as likely to be homeless. The circumstances of people identified as likely to be homeless on the 2011 SLCD can then be compared with their circumstances in 2006, and into the future it should be possible to report on repeat periods of homelessness and long term outcomes as seen in the SLCD. It will also be possible to compare these results, for those likely to be homeless, with the rest of the population. As outlined in the Census Data Enhancement Project paper referenced above, the ABS may enhance the 5% SLCD further by bringing it together with other non-ABS datasets (without using name and address) which would provide additional information for analysis (such as housing or health data).

## **DATA SOURCES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A METHODOLOGY FOR ESTIMATING HOMELESSNESS**

The ABS will use any data sources that are, or will become, available to check and/or refine the prevalence measure derived from the Census, or to help to understand and quantify mis-estimation of any sub-populations. This includes validation against the estimates generated from the current rules as well as to validate any new estimates generated from either a refinement of the derivation rules or an augmentation using new data. The additional datasets, as outlined earlier, will be examined over time to aid testing the decision rules applied to the Census. These datasets include the new specialist homelessness collection, the Journeys Home longitudinal survey, the General Social Survey (and future surveys using the homelessness module), the Centrelink homelessness/at risk of homelessness flag, the data generated by confronting the Census/Centrelink data sets, as well as sector derived datasets or other research that is relevant and emerges through responses to the Discussion Paper or through the ongoing work of the new Homelessness

Statistical Reference Group.

The Position Paper explores a number of issues with measuring homelessness. There is a particular focus on issues with the use of Census data to create a prevalence measure of homelessness, and on the complexity that is homelessness that impinges on the use of Census data to report on homelessness in many circumstances. Some of the issues covered include:

- Complexities of estimating homelessness
- The definition of homelessness
- Flow measures of homelessness.

This edition of this Position Paper covers other key issues with measuring homelessness. Some of the issues covered include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Youth
- Domestic violence
- The marginally housed
- Overcrowding
- Construction workers
- Travellers
- Recently arrived migrants and culturally and linguistically diverse populations
- Other non-private dwellings.

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## Flow measures of homelessness

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### FLOW MEASURES OF HOMELESSNESS

In the section: **Complexities in estimating homelessness**, both prevalence (point-in-time or stock) and incidence (or flow) measures of homelessness are discussed. An incidence or flow measure is an estimate of the number of people experiencing at least one period of homelessness over a given period of time, for example, over a 12 month period. Incidence measures have value in informing service provision by showing the potential demand for services over a given period.

For those who experience homelessness, the length of time in and nature of being homeless varies for different people. For some, being homeless is chronic and ongoing, whereas for others it is episodic. Research has indicated that homelessness among youth is more episodic rather than chronic (Robertson, 1991) and as a result, the characteristics of those identified in a prevalence measures may be different to those captured in an incidence measure.

In the **Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006** (ABS cat. no. 2050.0.55.001) the ABS used the Review estimate of around 65,000 persons enumerated in the Census and likely to have been homeless on Census night, to estimate the possible number of people who may have experienced at least one period of

homelessness over a year. ABS multiplied the published SAAP data for 2006-07, which show there were 118,800 clients and 69,100 accompanying children (AIHW 2008, tables 3.1 and 3.2), by the proportion of closed support periods for SAAP / CAP where accommodation was provided over the year in 2006-07 (39.9% for clients, and 57.5% for accompanying children) (AIHW 2008, tables 6.5 and 6.7) to derive an approximate total of 87,100 people accommodated in SAAP over the course of the year. This estimate is 6 times the estimate of 14,517 people accommodated in SAAP services on the 2006 Census night. Assuming the broad 6 to one relationship between SAAP accommodation throughout the year and Census night accommodation were to hold across other homelessness circumstances, the ABS estimated that the number of people who may have experienced periods of homelessness over the Census year may be between 340,000 and 440,000 people (a range of 5 to 7 times the reviewed estimate of 65,000 homeless people on Census night). No other data currently report on the scale of this aspect of homelessness in Australia.

The results from the 2010 ABS General Social Survey, available in late September 2011, will be analysed to provide further insight into the numbers of people who experience homelessness over an extended period of time (such as over the last 12 months, two years etc). Notwithstanding the limitations of this data source as outlined in section: **Complexities in estimating homelessness**, comparing the data for the different time spans will provide a perspective on the number of people experiencing homelessness over time, as well as on the length of time of the most recent period of homelessness. Building up a profile, across successive ABS surveys, of the proportion of the population reporting past periods of homelessness will allow a much richer picture of the flow of people into and out of homelessness over time. Measuring repeat periods of homelessness allows the dimension of flows into and out of homelessness to be analysed.

In addition, the ABS will also look into any other data that may provide a more accurate estimate of the total numbers of people who may experience homelessness over a 12 month period. The ABS will review the data that will be released from the new Specialised Homeless Services collection, that replaced the SAAP collection on 1 July 2011, from which it is expected that flow measures for specialist services users will be available. Analysis of the Centrelink homelessness flags provides another potential opportunity to look at flows for this client population. The 5% Statistical Longitudinal Census Dataset also has the potential to provide some perspectives on flows into and out of homelessness over very long time periods.

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## Definition of homelessness

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### DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS

There is no internationally agreed definition of homelessness. As outlined in the section **Complexities in estimating homelessness**, there are fundamental difficulties in defining homelessness, and, therefore, in describing the characteristics of people who might be considered to be homeless.

Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2008) in **Counting the Homeless, 2006** (ABS cat. no. 2050.0) discussed some of the debates with defining and applying a definition of homelessness. They described what is known as the 'cultural definition of homelessness',

and they applied this definition to the Census of Population and Housing data in an attempt to measure homelessness within Australia.

## THE CULTURAL DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS

The cultural definition of homelessness identifies shared community standards about the minimum housing that people have the right to expect. In CTH the cultural definition is summarised as follows:

**"The minimum community standard is a small rental flat - with a bedroom, living room, kitchen, bathroom and an element of security of tenure - because that is the minimum that most people achieve in the private rental market. ..."** (Counting the Homeless 2006, ABS cat. no. 2050.0).

Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2008) also presented a model of homelessness that explored an application of the cultural definition. They divided those people living outside of the minimum standard of housing into five groups:

- Marginally housed: people in housing situations close to the minimum standard;
- Tertiary homelessness: people living in single rooms in private boarding houses without their own bathroom, kitchen or security of tenure;
- Secondary homelessness: people moving between various forms of temporary shelter including friends, emergency accommodation, youth refuges, hostels and boarding houses;
- Primary homelessness: people without conventional accommodation (living in the streets, in deserted buildings, improvised dwellings, under bridges, in parks, etc); and
- Culturally recognised exceptions: where it is inappropriate to apply the minimum standard, e.g. seminaries, goals, student halls of residence.

Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2008) then sought to measure homelessness using Census data. They also provided separate analysis of marginal residents of caravan parks, whom they did not include in the homeless estimates but indicated that they may be at risk of homelessness.

As detailed in the **Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006** (ABS cat. no. 2050.0.55.001), the ABS Review also applied the cultural definition of homelessness to Census data. In addition to the model outlined above, the ABS further considered the culturally recognised exceptions to the definition of homeless. The Chamberlain and MacKenzie definition from 1992 listed four specific exceptions that were culturally appropriate at that time but concluded with the fifth exception "...and so forth". This is reflected in both the **opportunity** to choose the minimum community standard of housing, and more contemporary views on lifestyle transitions such as 'sea change' or 'tree change'. The ABS outlines that people may trade-off, in the short to medium term, a housing standard in order to support their longer term aspirations, and that these people are not faced with the multiple dimensions of disadvantage that are experienced by many homeless people.

In order to apply, or operationalise, the cultural definition, Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2008) outlined four operational categories which they used to identify the homeless population from Census data. The ABS Review further explored records that contributed to the categories, and as a result, renamed some of categories to more closely reflect the homeless situation, and created a new category (Persons in other temporary dwellings). This formed five operational groups of homelessness:

- Persons who are in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out
- Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless
- Persons who are staying temporarily with other households
- Persons who are staying in boarding houses
- Persons in other temporary dwellings.

These operational categories are based on the cultural definition and can be mapped to the three levels of homelessness: primary, secondary and tertiary homelessness. However due to the limits of the variables collected in the Census, and the challenges of identifying those who are homeless, the operational groups can not take into account all aspects of the cultural definition. For example, it is not possible to determine from Census data if a dwelling has a kitchen or bathroom. Nor is it possible to infer whether there is security of tenure for all people.

The adequacy of the definition of homelessness was raised in the discussion forums and in many of the submissions the ABS received in response to the **Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006** (ABS cat. no. 2050.0.55.001). At many of the consultation forums there was discussion about the distinction between being 'house'less and being 'home'less. Submissions received by the ABS expressed varying views about the cultural definition. For example, one submission argued for the definition to be tightened to exclude those in some boarding house type accommodation, in part because government standards for residential accommodation have enhanced the quality and safety of such properties. There is also increasing provision of private rental to suit emerging needs that would fail the 'standard' of separate bedroom or separate kitchen. Other submissions argued for widening the aspects of housing inadequacy when delineating homelessness, for example by including overcrowding and/or those living in caravan parks. Another submission advocated for the definition to include aspects of 'home'. Some submissions suggested that the cultural definition did not meet their needs as a basis for estimating the number of people who are homeless in Australia, and they were in favour of a review of the definition used to estimate homelessness.

Submissions also addressed the application of a cultural definition. Some submissions sought to have the cultural definition applied uniformly to all persons, while other submissions supported identifying those who may not be occupying accommodation that met the specified minimum standard of housing in CTH, but nevertheless should not be considered to be homeless. One example provided was construction workers who, on Census night, were staying in what had been coded by a Census collector as improvised dwellings.

There are many other potential definitions of homelessness which could also be considered when attempting to estimate the number of people who are homeless within Australia. The cultural definition does not take into account all aspects that should be considered as to whether someone is likely to be homeless, nor does it consider persons who may be at risk of homelessness but were not homeless on Census night.

## **INTERNATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF HOMELESSNESS**

Some alternative international ideas and concepts of homelessness are briefly summarised below.

Internationally there is no accepted definition of homelessness, much less an operationalisation of such a definition. In Europe, Fédération Européenne' Associations Nationales Travailant avec les Sans-Abri (The European Federation of National

Organisations Working with the Homeless) have developed a European typology of homelessness and housing exclusion (ETHOS) which includes a conceptual definition of homelessness. This covers aspects of rooflessness, houselessness, living in insecure housing and/or living in inadequate housing (FEANTSA, 2011). While this is an overarching definition, there are differing definitions in each of the member countries. Data on homelessness for the European Union are not compiled centrally, or in a consistent manner, or at all in some cases (Greenhalgh, Miller, Mead, Jerome, and Minnery 2004).

In the United Kingdom, homelessness is defined in the Housing Act legislation (1996) as 'a person is homeless if there is nowhere where they (and anyone who is normally with them) can be reasonably expected to live' (Greenhalgh et al. 2004 p69).

The American Federal definition of homelessness is given in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act, Section 725 in reference to homeless children and youths, which states: 'The term 'homeless children and youths' - means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate night time residence (within the meaning of section 103(a)(1))'. The act provides examples of accommodation situations for children and youth who may fit the definition (SERVE, 2002).

The Institut Nataional D'Etudes Demographiques (INED) research on homelessness between 1993-2008 discusses the French short hand term for homelessness: 'with no permanent residence'. It considers the nuances of the terms 'residence' and 'permanent'. INED (2008) notes that the term 'residence' denotes more than a bed in either a hostel or with a voluntary organisation, and more than a makeshift shelter. 'Permanency' denotes the occupancy status of the place the person spends the night and rules out places which are liable to change or where the person does not have control over their tenure in that place. The researchers discuss the issues with operationalising such a definition of homelessness and the construction of a classificatory system which combines three dimensions: physical (the kind of premises where the person spent the night); the legal dimension (the right of the person to occupy the place); and the temporal dimension (how long the person can stay there).

Statistics New Zealand base their definition on the ETHOS typology covered above, but adapt it to meet the requirements and contexts in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand 2009). The definition starts with three domains as follows:

"The social domain is being able to pursue normal social relations, have a personal (household) living space, maintain privacy and have safe accommodation. The legal domain covers having exclusive possession, security of occupation or tenure. The physical domain is the structural aspect of housing and means having habitable housing. The intersection of these domains with housing led to the development of conceptual categories that represent the absence of safe, secure and habitable housing. The New Zealand conceptual categories are 'without shelter', 'temporary accommodation', 'sharing accommodation' and 'uninhabitable housing'. Not all intersections of these domains are covered within this definition of homelessness." Some of the 'inadequate' and 'insecure' sections of the three domains are not included because they denote rather than being currently homeless being at risk of becoming homeless.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The ABS will consider the options both for a definition of homelessness and for ways to operationalise it. Aspects of homelessness which the ABS will consider include:

- the concept of adequacy of the dwelling and where it could be broadened to include

- the quality of the structure, need for repair and the security of the occupants;
- overcrowding, which is an aspect of dwelling adequacy for its occupants;
- the concept of 'home,' broadening the concept of housing adequacy to include a place to keep possessions, to relax and undertake recreational activities, a place to withdraw, and a place to build community with family and friends; and
- a state of houselessness or even rooflessness.

ABS will initially present the issues to the newly formed Homelessness Statistics Reference Group for discussion and advice. Subsequently, ABS will seek input more broadly. It is anticipated that the operationalisation, or measurement, of any revised definition of homelessness would be constrained by, and need to be tailored towards, the collections used for estimation (e.g. Census, survey, and administrative data systems etc). Any changes to the definition that result from consultation would be operationalised for estimating homelessness from the Census and ABS surveys. Census data compilation would also be considered in terms of supporting alternate views of homelessness.

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## **Key issues: Homelessness and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples**

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### **KEY ISSUES: HOMELESSNESS AND ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES**

#### **SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS**

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians were under-enumerated in the 2001 and 2006 Censuses. As Indigenous people are over-represented in the reviewed Census based estimates of homelessness, the ABS has noted that their under-enumeration in the 2001 and 2006 Censuses would contribute to the underestimation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the homeless population.
- The ABS recognises that cultural interpretations of the 'usual address' question by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and the use of different collection forms in enumerating some Indigenous people, will affect the capacity of analysts to classify as homeless some Indigenous people enumerated in the Census who may have been experiencing primary homelessness or staying temporarily with other households because they had nowhere else to live.
- The ABS activities for the 2011 Census aim to improve enumeration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians through involvement with Indigenous communities and services, in addition to education awareness strategies and the application of new procedures to improve the enumeration of Census forms.
- The ABS will investigate, including through community focus groups, later in the year, the development of a culturally appropriate module to collect previous experiences of homelessness in the 2014 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, in line with what has been collected in the 2010 General Social Survey. Expert input will be sought from both the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group and from the Advisory Group on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics to ensure the module is culturally appropriate to the context of homelessness among Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander people.

## INTRODUCTION

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are over-represented in homeless statistics. Whilst comprising only 2.3% of the total Australian population, the Review found that 6,655 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the 2006 Census dataset were classified as homeless (or 10% of all 63,469 homeless persons). However, Indigenous status is not reported for a significant proportion of those who were classified as homeless (14%). If those people for whom Indigenous status was not provided are excluded from the calculation, Indigenous people make up 12% of the reviewed estimates of homeless people, which is 5 times the proportion of the total population that is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin.

Of those Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people who were classified as homeless in the Review, the majority were enumerated in either supported accommodation (40%) or in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out (31%), with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians less likely than other Australians to be staying temporarily with other households (13%), or in boarding houses (13%), or in other temporary lodgings (2%).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are also over-represented in the administrative data on SAAP support periods. In 2006-07, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians accounted for 18.4% of clients for all support periods (AIHW 2008). In the Reviewed estimate, when excluding non-response for Indigenous status, 18.6% of people in supported accommodation for the homeless on Census night where identified as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people.

## UNDER-ENUMERATION OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE

As outlined in the **Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006** (ABS cat. no. 2050.0.55.001), the under-enumeration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Census would mean that it would also be expected that Indigenous Australians who were homeless at the time of the Census are also likely to be underestimated.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were under-enumerated in the past two Censuses, by 11.5% and 6.1% in 2006 and 2001 respectively (**Census of Population and Housing – Details of Undercount**, ABS cat. no. 2940.0), however there is no way to quantify the size of the homeless who may not have been enumerated. The enumeration is complicated in Northern Australia because the Census occurs when a number of cultural events are held which result in some Indigenous people being highly mobile while Census enumeration is occurring. Events such as rodeos, 'Motherhood' and Arnhem Land festivals occur during Census field work. In some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities the enumeration in past Censuses has occurred over some weeks to address the complexities in locating people due to increased internal mobility in Northern Australia at this time. Many people may be enumerated as visitors away from their usual residence or community during the Census. The ABS works closely with Indigenous communities to try to enumerate all people during the Census, and undertakes a special Indigenous enumeration strategy to maximise the enumeration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The ABS has expanded its Indigenous enumeration strategy since 2006 in order to reduce the under-enumeration of these populations.

## CULTURAL INTERPRETATIONS OF HOMELESSNESS: QUESTIONING THE APPROPRIATENESS OF 'PLACE OF USUAL RESIDENCE'

As discussed in detail in Chapter 7 of the Discussion paper, although most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are enumerated in the Census, one of the key variables used in classifying someone as homeless in the Census dataset is the reporting of 'no usual address'. However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may not necessarily define homelessness as a lack of accommodation, but as a multi-dimensional concept that includes people at risk, those sleeping in public spaces out of need or want, and spiritual homelessness as a result of dissociation from land and cultural isolation (Memmott, Long, Chambers, and Spring 2004).

It is debated in the literature whether the concept of 'no usual address' is appropriate for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Morphy (2007) discusses the problems in defining a 'usual resident' and 'visitor' in the context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, as the distinction between 'my country / not my country' is more salient than the distinction between 'resident / visitor'.

In the 2006 Census, 0.35% of all persons who were reported as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Australians were also reported as having no usual address, compared to 0.20% for non-Indigenous Australians. In the reviewed homeless estimates, 19% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians were reported as having no usual address. However, the low proportion of homeless Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Australians who were reported as staying with other households (13%) compared to non-Indigenous people (34%), suggests that reporting no usual address is under-reported for Indigenous people.

Several submissions to the review expressed concern about the low numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians reported as homeless and staying with other households, agreeing with the ABS Discussion Paper's view that overcrowding in Indigenous households may be masking some homelessness in this population.

## 2011 CENSUS ENUMERATION IMPROVEMENTS

The 2011 Census is a 'minimum change' Census: no new topics have been added and no existing topics have been changed. The interviewer household form for 2011 is essentially the same as for 2006. In particular, it has the same usual address question and instructions, and the same dwelling structure categories of 'caravan, tin shed or cabin' and 'humpy, tent or sleepout' that are included on the collector record book (see Chapter 7 of the Discussion Paper for more detail). This will mean that in communities where the interviewer household form is used, it is likely that few, if any, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people will be reported as having no usual address.

However, changes have been made to the Census procedures for 2011 to improve the enumeration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations. Getting a better count of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will mean that more Indigenous people will be reflected in the Census records rather than being missing, which will improve the capacity to look for and understand potential homelessness.

One of the procedural changes for the 2011 Census is a change to how the interviewer household form is administered and processed. In past Censuses, persons temporarily absent from their usual dwelling on Census night were enumerated wherever they were located on Census night. On the interviewer household form for the dwelling where any Indigenous person was absent on Census night, only the name and the variables for age

and sex were collected, but with extra detail on where the absent person might be, and the reasons for their absence. This was to assist with controlling for potential undercount.

An improvement to the interviewer household form for Indigenous communities is being implemented for the 2011 Census. The 2011 form will collect, from each household in a community, all Census variables for both visitors and for any usual resident, regardless of whether or not that usual resident is at home on Census night. Respondents will also be asked to report, for any usual resident who is temporarily absent: where they are expected to be staying on Census night; why they are away; and when they will be back. Persons may be reported as being in another dwelling in the same community, staying in another Indigenous community where the interviewer household form is used, or staying elsewhere.

The ABS has implemented procedures tailored to the enumeration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in discrete communities, since the 1976 Census. The 2011 Census procedures build on the experience developed through the 2006 Census Indigenous Enumeration Strategy. Procedures will be tailored in response to the requirements of each Indigenous community.

In most Indigenous communities, an interview form designed to be appropriate to Indigenous culture is used where there is a need due to cultural or language barriers. Where possible, Census field supervisors recruit, train and work with people from the community to manage the enumeration and conduct the interviews.

In urban and regional areas, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are enumerated using standard mainstream procedures and forms. Special collectors skilled in Indigenous languages and culture are available to assist in these areas if required. Special workloads will also use an interview approach which aims to increase data quality and response rates.

The ABS Indigenous Enumeration Strategy for this Census was developed in consultation with a range of organisations and government departments at all levels. This strategy describes procedures which allow for potential barriers, caused by cultural factors, to the effective enumeration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be addressed. The strategy provides procedures to cover the enumeration of:

- nominated discrete Indigenous communities; and
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households in urban and rural areas.

Part of the ABS Indigenous Enumeration Strategy is the employment of local people to assist in the enumeration of nominated Indigenous communities, with local managers or in some areas teams of staff to manage the enumeration. In urban areas with high Indigenous populations, Collectors will provide greater levels of support than in the past by offering to conduct an interview, with Special Collectors available to assist in other areas.

The communication aspects of the ABS Indigenous Enumeration Strategy include paid media advertising, a program of consultation with community leaders, briefings for representatives of Indigenous media outlets, use of posters and leaflets specifically designed for Indigenous communities, and the dissemination of information about the Census.

The improved enumeration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will improve the estimation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were homeless on Census night.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The ABS will utilise experts in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander homelessness to identify what improvements may be possible to classify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who may be homeless but report a usual address. The ABS will build on this expertise to identify what improvements can be made for the 2016 Census in the enumeration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. However, it is important to recognise that it will be difficult to accurately classify all homeless Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, for the reasons outlined above.

The ABS is also looking for other information to better inform on Indigenous homelessness. The ABS proposes to develop and test a module on the previous experiences of homelessness for use in the 2014 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS). This module would be in line with the module used in the 2010 General Social Survey. Expert input will be sought from both the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group and from the Advisory Group on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics to ensure the module is culturally appropriate to the context of homelessness among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

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## Key issues: Homelessness and youth

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### KEY ISSUES: HOMELESSNESS AND YOUTH

#### SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- The ABS Discussion Paper published in March 2011 noted that homeless youth staying with other households on Census night (such as those 'couch surfing') are not classified as homeless in the reviewed estimates if the household in which they are staying records a usual address for their visitor. No methodology has yet been developed in Australia that can differentiate in the Census data between homeless youth and other visitors if a usual address is reported.
- The ABS has undertaken additional analysis of youth, and presented it in this chapter to help to understand those visiting youth and how it can inform on the development of a methodology to estimate youth homelessness from the Census. The ABS will continue to undertake additional analysis to develop a final methodology, drawing on the expertise of the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group (HSRG) to identify areas of focus.
- The ABS will undertake a quality study of homeless school students after the Census to help understand the possible level of usual address reporting for visiting homeless youth in the 2011 Census. This study will also scope a possible methodology for a regular survey of homeless school students.
- The ABS has been working with homeless service providers in each state and territory to encourage reporting of no usual address in the 2011 Census by all homeless people, including young people and especially those who are couch surfing.

## INTRODUCTION

As outlined in the **Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006** (ABS cat. no. 2050.0.55.001), once the homeless operational groups decision rules had been applied to the Census, the numbers of 12-18 year olds who were identified as likely to be homeless were analysed. It is commonly assumed that the number of homeless youth enumerated in the Census will be underestimated as the households they are staying with may not know that they are unable to return to their home and will record their previous home address as their usual residence. Alternatively, the youth themselves may not identify themselves as homeless given the potential impact of being able to stay on in the household they are visiting. The ABS is undertaking a quality study after the Census on homeless school students which should inform on this assumption and help to further understand homeless young people.

In their CTH analysis, Chamberlain and MacKenzie classified 6,378 youth aged 12 to 18 years old who were enumerated in the Census as homeless. However, a separate CTH estimate of youth homelessness was derived by Chamberlain and MacKenzie (21,940 people) using sources other than the Census. The main source that was used was their National Census of Homeless School Students (NCHSS), adjusted using assumptions about the ratio of school to non-school homeless youth aged 12 to 18 years. In CTH the difference between the Chamberlain and MacKenzie Census measure and their separate estimate is assumed to relate to those youth who may be homeless who were staying with another household on Census night but had a usual address reported for them. CTH concludes "...we think the missing 15,562 are hidden within this category". CTH, pages 18 to 20 explains this methodology in more detail. The ABS has concluded that the Chamberlain and MacKenzie estimate of 21,940 homeless youth is not sufficiently robust to accurately inform on the numbers of 12-18 year old youth who were experiencing homelessness on Census night. The Chamberlain and MacKenzie estimate is based on school reports which capture youth homelessness over a week rather than on Census night; it uses an undercount adjustment methodology that is inconsistent between Censuses; and it applies an extrapolation to the non-school youth population that is both inconsistent with the stated methodology and which overstates the estimate. See pages 46 to 48 in the Discussion paper for more information. In addition, using an external source to provide an estimate of the possible number cannot inform on the characteristics or locations of homeless 12-18 year olds, limiting the usefulness of the data for policy and services planning purposes.

In analysing the characteristics of 12-18 year olds who had a usual address reported and were visitors on Census night, no characteristics have yet been identified that differentiate between those who were homeless and those who were visiting for other reasons. Additional analysis on the characteristics of the possible relationship status of the 39,966 12-18 year old usual residents visiting on Census night was provided in the Discussion Paper to try to understand any characteristics that can be used to distinguish potential homeless groups. This analysis used age, sex and Census District of usual residence to attempt to understand possible family units travelling together.

This chapter provides additional information on visitors' student status, labour force status and household type to help further inform on this group. The expertise of the HSRG will be sought to determine whether there are any characteristics to determine those who are more likely to be homeless, by utilising the data that have already been analysed and any other data using Census variables, or external datasets that may be useful to inform the analysis.

For the 2011 Census, the ABS has a focus on improving the enumeration of all people who may be homeless on Census night, and this is expected to lead to better Census based estimates of homeless young people from the 2011 Census. In particular, encouraging people who are 'couch surfing' to both ensure that they are reported in the Census and that

'no usual address' is reported for them will improve the estimation.

## USING THE CENSUS TO CLASSIFY HOMELESS YOUTH

Using the 2006 Census data, the Review methodology estimated that there were 5,424 youth aged 12 to 18 years who were enumerated and could be reasonably classified as homeless on Census night. This accounts for 9% of the total homeless population. The ABS acknowledged in its Discussion Paper that this is an underestimate of the numbers of 12-18 year olds who were homeless in 2006 on Census night because it cannot distinguish between homeless 'couch surfers' with a reported usual address, and other visitors who reported a usual address elsewhere but were not homeless.

The following two tables compare the Review estimates with the CTH estimates. The remainder of this chapter will focus on where possible underestimation for youth homelessness may occur, including the rules applied to arrive at the current estimate, as well as further analysis of this group.

While the ABS does not define what age group should be considered when estimating youth homelessness, it had presented data for 12-18 year olds in the Discussion Paper in order to compare directly with the work done in CTH.

Some submissions provided to the Review, indicated that within the homeless sector, youth generally refers to those aged 12-24 years or 12-25 years. Because the Review numbers are identified directly from the Census, any age groups can be calculated and analysed. Later in this Chapter, statistics for persons aged 12 to 24 years are discussed. These can be used to analyse whether the characteristics of 12-24 year olds are more in line with the experiences of those who work with homeless youth.

### Comparing Review estimates with CTH estimates

**Table 1 - AGE DISTRIBUTION, Review, Counting the Homeless and Estimated Resident Population - 2006**

Age Group (years)	Persons identified as homeless in the Review			Persons identified as homeless in CTH			Estimated Resident Population		
	%	% male	% female	%	% male	% female	%	% male	% female
Under 12	12	52	48	12	52	48	15	51	49
12-18	9	48	52	21	46	54	10	51	49
19-24	13	55	45	10	53	47	8	51	49
25-34	19	60	40	15	58	43	14	50	50
35-44	17	66	34	13	63	37	15	50	50
45-54	14	68	32	12	64	36	14	50	50
55-64	10	65	35	10	61	39	11	50	50
65+	8	64	36	7	64	36	13	45	55
All persons	100	60	40	100	56	44	100	50	50

Source: Census of Population and Housing, 2006; Chamberlain and MacKenzie, 2008, *Counting the Homeless, 2006* (ABS cat. no. 2050.0); ABS Australian Demographic Statistics, June Quarter, 2006 (ABS. cat. no. 3101.0).

**Table 2 - AGE OF YOUTH VISITING PRIVATE DWELLINGS WHO REPORT HAVING A USUAL ADDRESS ELSEWHERE(a), 12-18 years - 2006**

Youth identified as homeless in the Review	no.	%	Youth identified as homeless in CTH before applying their adjustment	no.	%	Youth identified as homeless in CTH after applying their adjustment	no	%
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Persons who are in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping rough	631	12	1,307	21	1,307	6
Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless	2,721	50	(b) 2,407	(b) 38	2,407	11
Persons staying temporarily with other households	1,055	19	1,487	23	16,143	77
Persons staying in boarding houses	902	17	1,171	18	1,171	6
Persons in other temporary lodging	115	2	..	..	..	..
<b>All homeless youth aged 12–18 years</b>	<b>5,424</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>6,372</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>21,028</b>	<b>100</b>

.. not applicable

(a) Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data

(b) Uses a support period derived outside the Census data rather than a Census night estimate of people accommodated in SAAP.

Source: Chamberlain and MacKenzie, 2008, **Counting the Homeless, 2006** (ABS cat. no. 2050.0).

Table 1 represents the proportions of the homeless populations in each of the age groups for the Review and CTH estimates. It then compares them to the estimated resident population. While 12-18 year olds are the smallest homeless proportion in the Review estimate, this group spans a smaller age range than the other groups (which are ranges of 10 years or more).

When the CTH homeless estimate and the Estimated Resident Population for 12–18 year olds are compared (Table 1), homeless youth are over represented. The other homeless age groups are generally in line with their proportions in the total population (apart from the groups for 65 years and over, and under 12 years, which are both under represented in the homelessness estimates in CTH). When looking at the combined age range of 12-24 years, the differences are less pronounced. And while for the 12-18 year old group the CTH estimate is 4 times the reviewed estimate, for persons aged 19-24 years old the CTH estimate is only about 30% higher than the reviewed estimate.

Table 2 shows the proportion of 12-18 year olds in each of the homeless operational groups in the Review, in CTH before the NCHSS adjustment was applied, and in CTH after the addition of 14,656 youth in the persons 'staying temporarily with other households' (titled 'staying with friends and relatives' in CTH). This shows that the category containing 'couch surfers' staying in private dwellings accounts for the majority of homeless youth in CTH (77%). This is after the adjustment is applied to the Census data using the NCHSS. Prior to the adjustment it was 23%, and in the Review was 19%. Studies done by Banyule Nillumbik Youth Services Network (2010) and the Housing Young People Action Team (2005) found high proportions of young people who were homeless or at risk of homelessness staying with other households. In the Banyule Nillumbik Youth Services Network study of 98 homeless secondary school students aged 12 to 18 years in 2009, 43 were staying in caravans. Some of the families living in caravans were likely to be doing so because of the Victorian bushfires, but not all. Another 34 homeless youth were staying temporarily with friends/relatives, 12 were in supported accommodation, and 9 had no fixed address. In the Housing Young People Action Team study of 170 young people aged 15 to 25 years who were homeless or at risk of homelessness, 59 were aged 15 to 18 years. Across the group aged 15 to 25 years who were homeless or at risk of homelessness, 97 (57%) were staying with friends and relatives.

The potential numbers of youth who may be homeless on a single night, such as Census night, and those who have experienced it over a longer period, such as a year, may vary substantially. For those who experience homelessness, the length and nature of being homeless varies. For some, being homeless is chronic and ongoing, whereas for others it is episodic. Research has indicated that homelessness among youth is more episodic rather than chronic (Robertson 1991) and would result in a difference in the number of homeless youth counted on a single night as opposed to counting the number of youth experiencing

homelessness over a longer period.

Since the Review estimates were published in the Discussion Paper in March 2011, some further analysis was conducted of estimates of homeless youth aged 12-18 years and enumerated in the Census, in order to understand the relatively high numbers enumerated in boarding houses on Census night compared to those who were staying with other households. Of the reviewed estimate of 900 youth in boarding houses, 74% were enumerated in a dwelling that was classified by the Census collector as a 'boarding house, private hotel', while the other 26% were enumerated as being in other dwellings. The Discussion Paper noted that the review had focussed on the CTH reclassification, as boarding houses, of dwellings that were enumerated by Census collectors as either private dwellings or other non-private dwellings and had not challenged the Census collector classification of boarding houses. In more recent analysis, about a dozen dwellings enumerated by collectors as boarding houses, with about 300 youth aged 12 to 18 years, enumerated in them who were mostly studying full-time, and with the other people in these dwellings generally being teachers, special care workers, and some clerical or administrative staff. The majority of these dwellings were in town centres across regional Australia with the few others being matched to mis-classified residential colleges or language schools. For those dwellings in regional town centres, secondary schools were found to be nearby to these dwellings and in a number of cases these dwellings aligned with known rural student hostels which support geographically isolated families without daily access to schools. Overall, about 400 youth aged 12 to 18 years were found to be included in this group in dwellings which appear to be legitimate student lodgings. Taking this information into account, the percentage of homeless youth aged 12 to 18 years staying in boarding houses would decrease to 10% and the percentage in the other categories would increase, including those staying temporarily with other households (21%).

A number of submissions noted that the Census is held on a Tuesday night in August (in winter, or the dry in Northern Australia) during the school term so it would be logical to assume a relatively lower proportion of young people away from home on a school night compared to non-school nights. In the 2006 Census there were 39,966 youth visiting other dwellings, or about 2% of the 1.9 million youth aged 12 to 18 years in 2006. However, the distribution across the ages is not uniform - a quarter were 18 years old and another 32% were either 16 or 17 years old, and only 10% to 12% in the younger ages.

It would be expected that some of those visitors on Census night would be staying with a parent living elsewhere or a grandparent or another relative who does not live at the youth's usual address. The ABS knows, from the 2006-07 **Family Characteristics and Transitions Survey** (ABS cat. no. 4442.0) that 36,400 youth aged 12-17 years stayed overnight with a natural parent living elsewhere at least once a week. When looking over a year, there were 21,300 youth aged 12-17 years who stayed at least 30% or more nights with their natural parent living elsewhere per year, of which 10,600 youth aged 12-17 years spent 50% or more nights per year with their natural parent living elsewhere. Many more youth (about 200,000) stayed overnight less frequently than once a week on average, but some would be expected to have been staying on Census night. The numbers of 18 year olds regularly staying with their parent living elsewhere, or the number of 12 to 18 year olds staying regularly with grandparents or other relatives are not known.

### **Further analysis of 40,000 visiting 12-18 year olds who reported a usual address elsewhere**

The Discussion paper presented some preliminary analysis of the characteristics of the 40,000 12-18 year olds who were visitors on Census night and a usual address elsewhere in Australia was reported for them. The analysis was aimed at identifying which groups of youth, if any, were more likely to include significant numbers of youth who may have been

homeless on Census night. Comments received during consultations indicated that in any of these groups there may be some homeless students, and no group was identified by stakeholders as more likely than any other group to include homeless youth.

As noted in the Discussion paper, while relationships between visitors, and between visitors and hosts, are collected in the Census, Census processing does not capture these relationships and the Census forms are destroyed after processing. Therefore, visitor relationships cannot be directly analysed to determine whether they are related to any of the persons in the household, or whether the visitors are related to each other. To better understand the characteristics of the 12-18 year olds visiting on Census night, age, sex, and the Collection District (CD) variables were used to infer relationship status which was then used to categorise visiting youth in the table below. As CDs are small geographic areas, groups of visitors that are all visiting the same dwelling, and all report the same CD of usual address elsewhere, and are present in age/sex combinations that are akin to usual family structures, it has been assumed that these groups are families visiting together.

**TABLE 3 - VISITING YOUTH WITH A REPORTED USUAL ADDRESS(a)(b)**

<i>Visiting circumstance</i>	<i>Number</i>
a Visiting youth enumerated in visitor only households	6,200
<i>Youth visiting usual residents:</i>	
b And travelling with both their 'parents', or with their 'father', or travelling with other visiting youths (c)	8,600
c Youth accompanied by children under 12 years	2,100
d Lone youth visiting a lone person household	3,100
e Other	20,000
<b>Total visiting youth</b>	<b>40,000</b>

(a) Youth defined as 12–18 years of age.

(b) These figures are rounded to the nearest 100.

(c) Reference to a 'parent' or 'father' is assumed based on highly suggestive data and doesn't reflect a recorded visitor relationship.

For youth visiting on their own without accompanying parents, if relationship status was available, this would be limited to identifying who was visiting another relative, such as their grandmother but could not identify whether it was because they were homeless, or because they were being cared for by their grandmother for the night while parents were away, or simply to spend time with the grandparent. The 2009-10 **Family Characteristics Survey** (ABS cat. no. 4442.0) reported on youth who had daily contact with their maternal grandparent. In lone mother families about 40,000 youth had daily contact, with even higher numbers of youth from couple families having daily contact.

Table 4 below shows the age groups of those youth who were visiting private dwellings and a usual address elsewhere was reported on Census night.

The data show that the numbers of youth visiting on Census night in 2006 increase with age, with over half of the youth visiting on Census night with a usual address reported elsewhere were aged between 16-18 years

**TABLE 4 - AGE OF YOUTH VISITING PRIVATE DWELLINGS WHO REPORTED HAVING A USUAL ADDRESS ELSEWHERE(a)(b) - 2006**

<i>Age (years)</i>	<i>no.</i>
12	4,200
13	4,100
14	4,200
15	4,900
16	5,700
17	6,900
18	10,000

<b>Total</b>								<b>40,000</b>
(a) Youth defined as 12–18 years.								
(b) These figures have been rounded to the nearest 100.								

The following tables provide comparisons of the student status and labour force status for all 12-18 year olds reported in the Census, for those identified as visiting on Census night, and for those who were identified as homeless in the reviewed estimates.

**Table 5 - ALL YOUTH(a), Student Status and Labour Force Status - 2006**

Age group (years)		STUDENT STATUS						
		Full-time student	Part-time student	Institution stated(b)	All students	Not attending	Not stated	Total
<b>12-14 years</b>								
Total	no.	762,000	3,000	7,000	772,000	—	53,000	825,000
	%	92	—	1	94	—	6	100
<b>15-18 years</b>								
Employed	no.	254,000	36,000	2,000	292,000	124,000	4,000	420,000
	%	60	9	—	69	30	1	100
Unemployed	no.	35,000	3,000	300	38,000	27,000	1,000	66,000
	%	52	5	—	58	41	1	100
Not in the labour force	no.	497,000	8,000	3,000	508,000	35,000	5,000	548,000
	%	91	1	1	93	6	1	100
Not stated	no.	—	1,000	1,000	2,000	5,000	48,000	55,000
	%	—	2	2	4	10	86	100
Total	no.	786,000	48,000	6,000	840,000	191,000	58,000	1,090,000
	%	72	4	1	77	18	5	100
<b>Total 12-18 years</b>								
<b>Total</b>	<b>no.</b>	<b>1,550,000</b>	<b>51,000</b>	<b>13,000</b>	<b>1,610,000</b>	<b>191,000</b>	<b>111,000</b>	<b>1,910,000</b>
	%	81	3	1	84	10	6	100

– nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

(a) These figures are rounded.

(b) Full/part-time student status not stated.

**TABLE 6 - THE 40,000 VISITING YOUTH(a), Student Status and Labour Force Status - 2006**

Age Group (years)		STUDENT STATUS						
		Full-time student	Part-time student	Institution stated(b)	All students	Not attending	Not stated	Total
<b>12-14 years</b>								
Total	no.	10,700	80	100	10,900	—	1,500	12,400
	%	86	1	1	88	—	12	100
<b>15-18 years</b>								
Employed	no.	4,200	1,500	40	5,700	5,500	200	11,400
	%	37	13	—	50	48	2	100
Unemployed	no.	700	200	10	900	1,800	40	2,700
	%	26	7	—	33	67	1	101
Not in the labour force	no.	8,500	300	70	8,900	2,200	200	11,300
	%	75	3	1	79	19	2	100
Not stated	no.	—	50	30	80	300	1,800	2,200
	%	—	2	1	4	14	82	99
Total	no.	13,400	2,000	150	15,600	9,800	2,200	27,600
	%	49	7	1	57	36	8	100
<b>Total 12-18 years</b>								
<b>Total</b>	<b>no.</b>	<b>24,100</b>	<b>2,100</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>26,500</b>	<b>9,800</b>	<b>3,700</b>	<b>40,000</b>
	%	60	5	1	66	25	9	100

– nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

(a) These figures are rounded.

(b) Full/part-time student status not stated.

**Table 7 - ALL HOMELESS YOUTH(a), Student Status and Labour Force Status - 2006**

Age Group (years)		Full-time student	Part-time student	Institution stated(b)	All students	Not attending	Not stated	Total
<b>12-14 years</b>								
Total	no.	1,100	20	30	1,200	—	400	1,600
	%	69	1	2	75	—	25	100
<b>15-18 years</b>								
Employed	no.	200	70	—	300	400	10	700
	%	29	10	—	43	57	1	101
Unemployed	no.	200	50	—	200	400	10	600
	%	33	8	—	33	67	2	102
Not in the labour force	no.	1,200	100	10	1,300	600	20	1,900
	%	63	5	1	68	32	1	101
Not stated	no.	—	—	10	10	30	600	600
	%	—	—	2	2	5	100	107
Total	no.	1,600	200	20	1,800	1,400	600	3,800
	%	42	5	1	47	37	16	100
<b>Total 12-18 years</b>								
Total	no.	2,700	200	50	3,000	1,400	1,000	5,400
	%	50	4	1	56	26	19	100

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

(a) These figures are rounded.

(b) Full/part-time student status not stated.

For the visiting youth aged 15-18 years, 57% were students, 20% were not studying but were employed, and a further 7% have 'not stated' for both of these variables. Of those not studying, 41% were not in the labour force or were unemployed. For the whole 15-18 year old population, 77% were studying, 11% were not studying but were employed and 5% not stated on both variables. Of those not studying, 32% were not in the labour force or were unemployed.

Overall, visiting youth aged 15-18 years with a usual residence elsewhere were less likely to be students and more likely to be employed.

For homeless youth identified in the review, 28% were aged 12-14 years old with a high proportion of student status 'not stated' (23%).

For homeless youth identified in the review aged 15-18 years, less than half (47%) were students, 10% were not studying but were employed, while 17% have 'not stated' for both of these variables. Interestingly, 70% of those older homeless youth who are not studying are either unemployed or not in the labour force, compared with 41% for visitors and 32% for total youth.

The next two tables show the student and labour force status for two of the identified possible sub-populations of the 40,000 visiting youth, 1) those who are visiting on their own, or who may be visiting with one accompanying adult female, and 2) those youth in a visitor only household without any persons of parenting age.

Both of these visiting sub-groups had a lower proportion of 12-14 year olds, than did either the homeless population or the total 12-18 year old population. These sub-groups of visitors also had a higher proportion of 15-18 year olds who were studying compared to the homeless population but lower than for all 15-18 year olds. Of those who were not studying, in terms of being employed ( 59%) they were closer in line with the whole 15-18 year old population (67%) than with those who were identified as homeless (29%).

**TABLE 8 - THE 20,000 VISITING YOUTH ON THEIR OWN OR WITH ONE ADULT FEMALE(a), Student Status and Labour Force Status - 2006**  
STUDENT STATUS

Age Group (years)		Full-time student	Part-time student	Institution stated(b)	All students	Not attending	Not stated	Total
<b>12-14 years</b>								
Total	no.	4,100	30	60	4,200	—	620	4,800
	%	85	1	1	88	—	13	100
<b>15-18 years</b>								
Employed	no.	2,300	900	20	3,200	3,200	100	6,500
	%	35	14	—	49	49	2	100
Unemployed	no.	400	100	10	500	1,100	30	1,600
	%	25	6	1	31	69	2	102
Not in the labour force	no.	4,200	200	40	4,500	1,100	70	5,700
	%	74	4	1	79	19	1	99
Not stated	no.	—	30	10	40	100	1,000	1,100
	%	—	3	1	4	9	91	104
Total	no.	6,900	1,200	100	8,200	5,500	1,200	14,900
	%	46	8	1	55	37	8	100
<b>Total 12-18 years</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>11,000</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>12,400</b>	<b>5,500</b>	<b>1,800</b>	<b>19,700</b>
	%	56	6	1	63	28	9	100

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

(a) These figures are rounded.

(b) Full/part-time student status not stated.

**TABLE 9 - THE 1,000 VISITING YOUTH WITHOUT 'PARENTS' IN A VISITOR ONLY HOUSEHOLD(a)(b), Student Status and Labour force status - 2006**

Age Group (years)		Full-time student	Part-time student	Institution stated(c)	STUDENT STATUS			Total
					All students	Not attending	Not stated	
<b>12-14 years</b>								
Total	no.	180	—	—	180	—	30	210
	%	86	—	—	86	—	14	100
<b>15-18 years</b>								
Employed	no.	170	60	—	230	240	—	470
	%	36	13	—	49	51	—	100
Unemployed	no.	30	—	—	30	30	—	60
	%	50	—	—	50	50	—	100
Not in the labour force	no.	260	10	—	270	40	—	310
	%	84	3	—	87	13	—	100
Not stated	no.	—	—	—	—	10	20	30
	%	—	—	—	—	33	67	100
Total	no.	460	70	—	500	320	20	840
	%	55	8	—	60	38	2	100
<b>Total 12-18 years</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>1,050</b>
	%	61	7	—	65	30	5	100

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

(a) These figures are rounded.

(b) Reference to a 'parent' is assumed based on highly suggestive data and doesn't reflect a recorded visitor relationship.

(c) Full/part-time student status not stated.

The next two tables show, for people in private dwellings, the household type for both the 12-18 year old visitors and those identified as homeless by the Review. The key differences between these two populations are the greater proportion of homeless youth in Group households (8%, compared with 4% for the households visited by youth) and the greater proportion of visiting youth in visitor only households (15% compared to 4% for homeless youth).

In looking at the 12-18 year olds who were visiting on Census night and had reported a usual residence elsewhere, and using the assumed family type (based on age, sex and CD

of usual residence of the visitors) and the composition of the households they are visiting, around 60% of those youth visiting with two adults of opposite sex and parenting age (assumed to be couple family), were in visitor only dwellings.

For those youth who were visiting with a single male adult visitor who could be their parent, over half (53%) were staying with a one family household, and around a fifth were in visitor only households. In contrast those youth who were with a single female adult who could be their parent, 37% were visiting a one family household, 29% were visiting a lone person household and 23% were in visitor only households.

For a single 12-18 year old youth who were not visiting with anyone else, 71% were visiting a one family household (this will include couples with or without children or a single parent with children) and a further 15% were visiting lone person households. In contrast for multiple 12-18 year olds visiting another household together, 56% were visiting a one family household and 23% were visiting a lone person household, and for the 12-18 years olds visiting with a child/ren under 12 years, 59% were visiting a single family household, and 27% were visiting a lone person household.

**TABLE 10 - VISITING 12-18 YEARS OLDS ON CENSUS NIGHT WHO HAD A USUAL RESIDENCE REPORTED ELSEWHERE(a) - 2006**

Assumed Visitor Relationship (between visitors) (b)	One family household	HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION (OF DWELLING VISITED)					Total
		Multiple family household	Group household	Lone person household	Visitor only	Other not classifiable	
Couple Family no.	800	30	40	400	2,400	300	4,000
Single Male Parent no.	1,600	50	100	500	600	100	3,000
Single Female Parent no.	1,800	40	200	1,400	1,100	300	4,800
Single Youth no.	14,300	300	1,000	3,100	500	800	20,000
Multiple Youth no.	2,200	40	100	900	500	200	3,900
Youth with Children no.	1,300	40	80	600	40	100	2,200
Other no.	500	60	60	300	1,000	100	2,000
<b>Total no.</b>	<b>22,500</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>1,600</b>	<b>7,200</b>	<b>6,100</b>	<b>1,900</b>	<b>40,000</b>
<b>Total %</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>

(a) These figures are rounded.

(b) Reference to a 'parent' is assumed based on highly suggestive data and doesn't reflect a recorded visitor relationship.

**TABLE 11 - HOMELESS YOUTH ENUMERATED IN PRIVATE DWELLINGS(a)(b) - 2006**

Age group (years)		People who	People in	Persons	People	All homeless persons
		are in	supported	staying	staying in	
<b>12-14 years</b>		improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out	for the homeless	temporarily with other households	boarding houses	
		no.	no.	no.	no.	%
	One family household	145	592	153	—	890 71
	Multiple family household	23	16	4	—	43 3
	Lone person household	3	10	74	—	87 7
	Group household	—	3	6	—	9 1
	Visitors only	9	20	33	—	62 5
	Other not classifiable	41	92	25	—	158 13
	<b>Total</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>733</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>1,249 100</b>
<b>15-18 years</b>						
	One family household	131	801	471	—	1,403 54

Multiple family household	22	28	16	—	66	3
Lone person household	221	200	150	—	571	22
Group household	4	209	47	40	300	12
Visitors only	8	48	23	3	82	3
Other not classifiable	24	97	55	—	176	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>1,383</b>	<b>762</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>2,598</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total 12–18 years</b>						
One family household	276	1,393	624	—	2,293	60
Multiple family household	45	44	20	—	109	3
Lone person household	224	210	224	—	658	17
Group household	4	212	53	40	309	8
Visitors only	17	68	56	3	144	4
Other not classifiable	65	189	80	—	334	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>631</b>	<b>2,116</b>	<b>1,057</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>3,847</b>	<b>100</b>

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

(a) The other 1,600 12–18 year olds were in non-private dwellings.

(b) Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

Further analysis of these visitor groups will be undertaken and the results reviewed by the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group for guidance.

### Homeless youth aged 12 to 24 years

Expanding the analysis of homeless youth to a 12-24 years age group aligns more closely with the age group targeted for youth homeless services. This wider age group has a higher proportion of visitors staying temporarily with other households (29% compared with 19% for the smaller, younger group).

The percentage of homeless youth 12-24 years is estimated to be 21% of the reviewed estimates of homeless, which is 4 percentage points higher than their proportion of ERP and one of the largest populations in the homeless population.

The table below shows that for homeless persons aged 12 to 24 years, the largest group are still those in supported accommodation for the homeless (36%) but now 29% are staying temporarily with other households, the second highest group.

**TABLE 12 - HOMELESS OPERATIONAL GROUPS (a), 12-18 years, 12 to 24 years and All homeless persons - 2006**

Age group (years)	Persons who are in improvised dwellings, for the homeless tents or sleeping out		Persons in supported accommodation		Persons staying temporarily with other households		Persons staying in boarding houses		Persons in other temporary lodging		All homeless persons	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
12-18 years	631	12	2,721	50	1,055	19	902	17	115	2	5,424	100
12-24 years	1,291	10	4,775	36	3,866	29	3,028	23	456	3	13,416	100
All homeless persons	7,763	12	17,328	27	19,577	31	16,830	27	1,971	3	63,469	100

(a) Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

## FUTURE CENSUS IDENTIFICATION

For the 2011 Census, the ABS has been working with homeless service providers in each state and territory to encourage accurate reporting of no usual address by all homeless people including those who are couch surfing. While this may improve the under-estimation of homelessness in 2011, including for youth, for the reasons outlined in this chapter, some homeless youth who are 'couch surfing' may still not be reported as having no usual address and therefore are unlikely to classifiable as homeless in analysis of Census variables.

To help understand the possible under-reporting of homeless youth in the 2011 Census, the ABS will undertake a quality study of homeless school students after the Census. This study will also scope a possible methodology for a more frequent survey of homeless school students.

The ABS will continue to undertake additional analysis to develop the final methodology for how youth are included homelessness estimates, drawing on the expertise of the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group.

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## Key issues: Homelessness and domestic and family violence

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### KEY ISSUES: HOMELESSNESS AND DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

#### SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- The complex nature of domestic and family violence, together with limitations of the Census in estimating homelessness in the circumstances in which people experiencing such violence may find themselves, may result in an underestimate of homelessness using Census variables.
- For the 2011 Census the ABS will repeat the very successful 2006 practice of jurisdictional lists and the 'green sticker' approach for supported accommodation arrangements. This ensures that those who are seeking refuge from domestic violence and staying in supported accommodation will be included in the estimates. The ABS has also been working with homeless service providers in each state and territory to encourage accurate reporting of no usual address by all homeless people including those who may be staying with friends and relatives.
- The next Personal Safety Survey, to be run in 2012, is currently testing the inclusion of questions on housing arrangements upon separation from their partner. While this survey will have the same limitations as the General Social Survey, i.e. it is unlikely to interview anyone who is currently homeless, it will provide insight into the housing arrangements and circumstances of those who leave home due to violence.
- The ABS will draw on the expertise of the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group to further understand homelessness due to domestic violence.

## INTRODUCTION

As outlined in the **Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006** (ABS cat. no. 2050.0.55.001), under-identification in the homeless estimates is likely for those who were victims of domestic or family violence and were homeless on Census night. Feedback from the Review consultations indicated that women escaping from domestic violence come from all backgrounds and ages. It is also likely that some will report in the Census the usual address from which they have fled, and hence will not appear as homeless, or they may not be included on a Census form at all.

Service data show that domestic/family violence is a significant reason for women to be homeless, or at risk of homelessness. The SAAP support period data for 2006-07 showed that family/domestic violence was the most common reason for women seeking assistance (AIHW 2008). For both women with children, and lone women aged 25 years and over, it was the main reason (55% and 37% respectively). For lone women aged under 25 years, the reasons were more varied, with relationship/family breakdown the most common reason (21%), followed by domestic/family violence (16%).

The 2005 **Personal Safety Survey** (ABS cat. no. 4906.0) found that 5.8% or 443,800 women aged 18 years and over had experienced violence in the 12 months prior to the survey. This had declined from 7.1% in 1996. Of these women, 242,000 had experienced physical assault (3.1% of women, down from 5.0% in 1996). The survey also found that 31% of women who were physically assaulted in the previous 12 months, were assaulted by a current and/or previous partner (ABS 2006b).

However, not all populations experience violence at the same rate. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians aged 15 years and over, in 2008, nearly a quarter (23%) had been the victim of physical or threatened violence in the last 12 months. The proportions of Indigenous women and men who had been the victim of violence was the same (ABS 2008a).

The majority of submissions to the methodological review noted that the Census was an appropriate means to derive homeless estimates, despite challenges in enumerating and identifying sub-population groups, in particular women and children escaping domestic and family violence. Estimates are likely to be underestimated due to the complex nature of domestic and family violence, together with the limitations in both enumerating this homeless group and being able to accurately classify them as homeless in the Census data. Staying with other households and reporting a usual address mask homelessness in the Census dataset.

## ASSESSING CENSUS DATA

SAAP data provide views of male/female representation in this homeless context that can be compared with the Census based estimates.

The Table below shows, that around 2 in 5 of the people identified as homeless in the reviewed 2006 Census estimates were women. However this proportion varied across the age groups. It was highest for the younger age groups with 52% of those aged 12-18 years being female. The proportions also varied across the different homeless groups. It was lowest in boarding houses (25%) and highest in supported accommodation for the homeless (50%). When looking at the proportions in supported accommodation, the Census results were lower than the proportion of female clients in SAAP administrative data. In using the number of clients with at least one period of accommodation in their support period

spanning Census night in 2006, 58% of clients were female and 49% of accompanying children were female. When combining clients and accompanied children, 55% of people with support periods spanning Census night in the SAAP system, and during which support period some accommodation was provided, were female, slightly higher than the 50% in the reviewed estimates for Census night SAAP residents. It is highly likely that the support period measure overstates the female proportion on any night, as women tend to have longer support periods, on average, than men.

**TABLE 1 - HOMELESS OPERATIONAL GROUPS(a), Sex and Age - 2006**

		AGE GROUP (YEARS)								All homeless persons no.
		Under 12 no.	12–18 no.	19–24 no.	25–34 no.	35–44 no.	45–54 no.	55–64 no.	65+ no.	
PEOPLE WHO ARE IN IMPROVISED DWELLINGS, TENTS OR SLEEPING OUT										
Male	no.	422	343	415	825	1,065	941	588	394	4,993
Female	no.	361	287	245	496	525	418	255	183	2,770
<b>Total</b>	<b>no.</b>	<b>783</b>	<b>630</b>	<b>660</b>	<b>1,321</b>	<b>1,590</b>	<b>1,359</b>	<b>843</b>	<b>577</b>	<b>7,763</b>
% female	%	46	46	37	38	33	31	30	32	36
PEOPLE IN SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION FOR THE HOMELESS										
Male	no.	2,330	1,245	909	1,245	1,214	892	432	317	8,584
Female	no.	2,157	1,477	1,144	1,562	1,198	636	288	284	8,746
<b>Total</b>	<b>no.</b>	<b>4,487</b>	<b>2,722</b>	<b>2,053</b>	<b>2,807</b>	<b>2,412</b>	<b>1,528</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>601</b>	<b>17,330</b>
% female	%	48	54	56	56	50	42	40	47	50
PERSONS STAYING TEMPORARILY WITH OTHER HOUSEHOLDS										
Male	no.	1,034	510	1,537	2,618	2,036	1,375	1,139	787	11,036
Female	no.	970	546	1,274	1,771	1,112	1,082	1,169	619	8,543
<b>Total</b>	<b>no.</b>	<b>2,004</b>	<b>1,056</b>	<b>2,811</b>	<b>4,389</b>	<b>3,148</b>	<b>2,457</b>	<b>2,308</b>	<b>1,406</b>	<b>19,579</b>
% female	%	48	52	45	40	35	44	51	44	44
PEOPLE STAYING IN BOARDING HOUSES										
Male	no.	116	463	1,324	2,190	2,480	2,558	1,861	1,587	12,579
Female	no.	78	439	803	769	598	576	414	572	4,249
<b>Total</b>	<b>no.</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>902</b>	<b>2,127</b>	<b>2,959</b>	<b>3,078</b>	<b>3,134</b>	<b>2,275</b>	<b>2,159</b>	<b>16,828</b>
% female	%	40	49	38	26	19	18	18	26	25
PEOPLE IN OTHER TEMPORARY LODGING										
Male	no.	41	67	200	262	245	186	109	83	1,193
Female	no.	43	46	141	155	127	93	77	94	776
<b>Total</b>	<b>no.</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>1,969</b>
% female	%	51	41	41	37	34	33	41	53	39
ALL HOMELESS PERSONS										
Male	no.	3,943	2,628	4,385	7,140	7,040	5,952	4,129	3,168	38,385
Female	no.	3,609	2,795	3,607	4,753	3,560	2,805	2,203	1,752	25,084
<b>Total</b>	<b>no.</b>	<b>7,552</b>	<b>5,423</b>	<b>7,992</b>	<b>11,893</b>	<b>10,600</b>	<b>8,757</b>	<b>6,332</b>	<b>4,920</b>	<b>63,469</b>
% female	%	48	52	45	40	34	32	35	36	40

(a) Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

When looking at Census based homeless estimates, for registered marital status of homeless persons aged 18 years and over, females had a lower proportion who had never been married (51% compared to 60% for males), with a higher proportion who were in a registered marriage (23% compared to 14% for males). Being married was highest for those homeless women who were staying in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out (33%) and those who were staying temporarily with other households (32%). While social marital status (including de facto relationships) is also available on the Census, it is of limited value for those who have been identified as homeless, because social marital status is determined using current living arrangements. This cannot be identified for those who were visitors on Census night nor for those in non-private dwellings, particularly for those who were separated from their partner on Census night.

When looking at the labour force status of homeless women and men aged 15 years and over in the Reviewed estimates, a large proportion did not have their labour force status

reported (19% for women and 24% for men). A lower proportion of women in the homeless estimates were employed than men (24% compared 28%) and nearly half (49%) of women were not in the labour force, compared to 37% of men.

When looking at those in the reviewed homeless estimates who reported no usual address, a higher proportion of women reported no usual address than did men (41% compared to 36%). In contrast, women had a lower proportion who were classified as homeless and were reported as being 'at home' on Census night (56% compared to 62% for men). This is consistent with the higher proportions of men in improvised dwellings, tents and sleeping out, and in boarding houses.

## **ADDITIONAL DATA SOURCES TO INFORM ON HOMELESSNESS AND DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE**

The ABS welcomes any additional information that may help to distinguish which visitors on Census night who reported a usual address were homeless due to escaping violence, including other sources of data required to supplement the Census data.

The new AIHW Specialist Homelessness Services administrative collection, that replaced the SAAP collection on 1 July 2011 will help to inform on those who seek services as a result of domestic or family violence.

In addition, the ABS is testing questions for potential inclusion in the PSS 2012. These could cover information about a person's housing arrangements the last time they separated from a violent current partner and their housing arrangements at the end of their last violent previous partner relationship. The ABS is proposing to seek information from respondents who have experienced current partner violence, to establish whether they have ever separated from their violent current partner and had to leave their home, and if so, where they went the last time they separated. The ABS is also seeking to establish from respondents who experienced violence from a previous partner, when they left their last violent previous partner, whether they had to leave their home, and if so, where they went when the relationship finally ended: for example, whether they stayed with a friend or relative, slept rough, stayed in a refuge or shelter, stayed in temporary accommodation e.g. motel etc., or elsewhere. If they went to multiple places, they will be asked for the place in which they spent the most time.

While not a complete picture of where people went every time they separated during all relationships, if the testing is successful, this will provide an indication of what accommodation was used by people the last time they separated from their violent partner/s.

## **FUTURE CENSUS IDENTIFICATION**

For the 2011 Census, the ABS will repeat the successful 2006 practice of jurisdictional lists and the 'green sticker' approach for supported accommodation arrangements. This generated a count very close to Census week SAAP counts compiled by AIHW, but one with richer information about the homeless. This ensures that those who are seeking refuge from domestic violence and staying in supported accommodation will be included in the estimates based on Census data.

The ABS has also been working with homeless service providers in each state and territory to encourage accurate reporting of no usual address by all homeless people including those who may be staying with friends and relatives. While this may improve the under-estimation

of homelessness in 2011, some people who have escaped domestic or family violence may still not be reported as having no usual address, or not be recorded on a Census form at all, and therefore they cannot be identified in homeless estimation of the Census dataset.

The Census based estimates of homelessness by those escaping domestic or family violence are acknowledged as being underestimates, but using administrative data on those seeking support from services, and other sources such as the data collected from the ABS General Social Survey, and in future surveys such as the next Personal Safety Survey, will help to provide a broader understanding of the homeless circumstances of these people.

The ABS will draw on the expertise of the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group to further understand homelessness due to domestic violence.

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## Key issues: Marginally housed

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### KEY ISSUES: MARGINALLY HOUSED

#### SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- There is no agreed definition of 'marginal housing'
- **Counting the Homeless 2006** (ABS cat. no. 2050.0) identifies and analyses a population described as 'marginal residents of caravan parks' and reports details of this population separately to and alongside the homeless population.
- The ABS will undertake further analysis on this group and other characteristics which could be used to identify and understand the marginally housed
- The ABS will, along with the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group, explore how to define and measure the marginally housed population in the Census, and present the findings alongside estimates of homelessness.

#### INTRODUCTION

Marginal housing is housing which is not adequate for reasons such as no security of tenure, or the dwelling may be overcrowded, or it does not meet 'minimum expectations' - it does not have basic facilities or adequate facilities. Not only should marginal housing be understood in its own right, some of those who do not have security of tenure, or have poor quality housing, or live in overcrowded dwellings may be at risk of homelessness in the future. Some of the submissions received in the Review urged the ABS to consider changes to the application of the cultural definition of homelessness to include those marginally housed in caravan parks as part of the homeless population, in line with those living in boarding houses.

An example of people living in marginal housing is those who live in caravans in caravan parks. The marginally housed may live in caravans in caravan parks because they have either exhausted all other forms of accommodation, or are waiting for supported accommodation or for other forms of assistance, or cannot access other housing (for

example they cannot afford to rent conventional housing). The difficulty is in identifying the marginally housed separately to others in caravan parks such as holiday makers and those making a lifestyle decision to live in a caravan park.

## USING THE CENSUS TO IDENTIFY THE MARGINALLY HOUSED

The Census of Population and Housing does not collect information on the security of tenure or the quality of the dwelling, even though for some it can be inferred based on tenure type. Overcrowded dwellings can be determined from the Census and have been discussed separately in the Overcrowding Chapter. The Census provides information on residents of caravan parks but it can not at this time, differentiate between those in caravans, cabins or houseboats. As Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2008) report, it is now more common to find cabins as the main type of accommodation in caravan parks, and often have better facilities than a caravan, such as a separate kitchen and bathroom and more than one bedroom. Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2008) report that somewhere between one-quarter and one-half of marginal residents in caravan parks may be living in cabins and this undermines the argument that they are part of the tertiary homeless population.

When using the Census to measure marginal housing in caravan parks, the analysis starts with people who are using caravan parks as a usual place to live, and then using demographic and dwelling characteristics to infer whether the occupants have no alternative place to live. The **Counting the Homeless** (CTH) (ABS cat. no. 2050.0) approach was to undertake separate analysis of a population called 'marginal residents of caravan parks' and comparing the characteristics of this group with those of selected homeless sub-populations also derived in CTH. In CTH persons who are marginal residents of caravan parks are defined as:

- persons who were 'at home' on Census night AND
- persons living in a caravan, cabin or houseboat and the dwelling is located in a caravan park/residential park or camping ground AND
- persons with a tenure of 'renting', those who did not state their tenure, those with a tenure of 'rent free' and 'other tenure type' AND
- dwellings where no person in the dwelling was working full-time (defined to be 35 or more hours per week).

CTH analysed this group in more detail, comparing key characteristics to CTH estimates for selected sub-populations of homeless people including those found in CTH to be in the boarding house and 'visiting friends and relatives' groups. CTH provides arguments for and against including this group in the homeless population and concluded that there are convincing arguments on both sides. The CTH analysis does not include those that have been identified as 'marginal residents of caravan parks' in the homeless population, stating that although this group do not have a strong financial position they could be living in cabin accommodation and CTH "treat 'marginal residents of caravan parks', outside of the tertiary [homeless] population" (CTH 2008).

The ABS has briefly analysed the records for the 17,497 persons included as 'marginal residents of caravan parks' group. The people in this group have a range of tenures which may indicate a diverse range of circumstances. For example the CTH estimate for 'marginal residents of caravan parks' includes 6,818 people who had 'not stated' for their tenure type. However of this group 2,099 people (or 31%) were fully imputed records (i.e. no person was identified at the dwelling on Census night). A further 1,571 (or 23%) were 'head counted' by the collector (forms were not completed however the collector ascertained the number of persons and the sex of the occupants and then the rest of the demographic characteristics

were imputed). Some 1,062 additional records were partially imputed. The significant amount of imputation for this group means that it is impossible to draw conclusions about the 27% of the CTH marginally housed population who were imputed, nor for the 18% who did not state the tenure type, and all of these records, would need to be removed for future analysis to be undertaken to understand the characteristics of this group.

The following table shows selected demographics for all persons who were in a caravan, cabin, or houseboat in a caravan park / residential park or camping ground and who were 'at home' on Census night. This is broader than the definition used in CTH of marginally housed in a caravan park but provides a picture of usual residents of caravan parks, to enable further consideration of those who may be marginally housed (Fully imputed records and those where only a head count was obtained by the collector have been removed from the analysis).

As shown in the Table below, for the population who were renting, 35% were not in the labour force and 40% were employed, working either part or full time or away from work. Over half of renters were living at the same address one year prior to the Census, and a quarter had been living at the same address five years prior to the Census.

**TABLE 1 - PERSONS IN A CARAVAN, CABIN OR HOUSEHOLD IN A CARAVAN PARK/RESIDENTIAL PARK OR CAMPING GROUND WHO WERE 'AT HOME' ON CENSUS NIGHT, Tenure by Selected demographics - 2006**

	Owned outright	Owned with a mortgage	Being purchased under a rent/buy scheme	Rented	Being occupied rent-free	Being occupied under a life tenure scheme	Other tenure type	Not stated	Total
	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.
<b>Labour force status</b>									
Employed – worked full-time	4,660	654	85	4,264	355	18	156	613	10,805
Employed – worked part-time	2,592	222	32	1,592	88	3	48	220	4,797
Employed – away from work	659	108	10	386	30	–	27	173	1,393
Unemployed – looking for full-time work	826	25	9	1,329	3	7	14	85	2,298
Unemployed – looking for part-time work	314	13	9	332	8	–	10	29	715
Not in the labour force	19,403	308	99	5,560	155	58	165	1,316	27,064
Not stated	1,079	20	9	469	17	4	22	1,248	2,868
Not applicable (b)	886	252	30	1,797	76	–	52	207	3,300
<b>Usual address one year ago</b>									
Same as in 2006	23,837	1,132	170	8,255	431	71	314	2,033	36,243
Elsewhere in Australia	5,537	429	102	6,293	268	14	145	845	13,633
Overseas in 2005	176	6	4	411	7	–	10	69	683
Not stated	810	22	6	631	17	3	22	923	2,437
Not applicable	56	14	–	139	8	–	3	21	241
<b>Usual address five years ago</b>									
Same as in 2006	15,685	601	77	3,948	186	45	183	1,371	22,096
Elsewhere in Australia	10,950	733	137	7,795	376	38	201	974	21,204
Overseas in 2001	443	36	6	714	45	–	17	111	1,372
Same as in 2005	2,015	128	42	1,503	72	3	39	276	4,078
Not stated	1,052	32	12	1,065	27	3	36	1,094	3,321
Not applicable	275	74	8	704	25	–	17	66	1,169

<b>Total</b>	<b>30,420</b>	<b>1,604</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>15,729</b>	<b>731</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>3,892</b>	<b>53,240</b>
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– nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

(a) Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

(b) Includes children 0–14 years.

Further analysis is being undertaken by the ABS to gain a statistical picture of residents of caravan parks and to identify characteristics for a group living in caravan parks who could be identified as marginally housed. Focus group work will be considered after the 2011 Census to improve understanding of the circumstances of people enumerated in these settings.

In addition to those who are living in caravan parks, there are other forms of housing that would be considered to be marginal, such as those who live in substandard housing, do not have security of tenure and/or those who are living in overcrowded housing. Overcrowded housing is discussed separately in the Overcrowding Chapter.

The Census can not be used to give an indication of the adequacy or security of tenure of a dwelling beyond the proxy variables discussed above. However the ABS collects relevant data in the housing module included six yearly in the Survey of Income and Housing (SIH). These data were last collected in 2007–08. The SIH collects data from residents of private dwellings (excluding households from very remote areas). SIH data show that:

- 16% of private dwellings were reported to have major structural problems
- 57% reported that repairs had been undertaken in the 12 months prior to the survey
- 2.6% of dwellings needed 1 or more bedrooms
- Of renter households, 14% had no formal lease, and a further 14% were on month by month leases
- 4.5% of reference persons reported being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their dwelling (ABS 2009c; ABS 2009b).

## FUTURE CENSUS IDENTIFICATION

As a result of the review, including the feedback received through consultation and the submission process, and a further brief exploration undertaken into marginal housing, the ABS, with advice from the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group, will explore how to define the marginally housed population. The ABS will then determine if there are adequate characteristics, collected in the Census of Population and Housing which could be used to separately identify the population. Results of investigations will be presented alongside estimates of the homeless population.

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## Key issues: Overcrowding

The CNOS assesses the bedroom requirements of a household by specifying that:

- there should be no more than two persons per bedroom
- children less than 5 years of age of different sexes may reasonably share a bedroom
- children less than 18 years of age and of the same sex may reasonably share a bedroom

- single household members aged 18 years and over should have a separate bedroom, as should parents or couples
- a lone person household may reasonably occupy a bed sitter.

The output is the number of extra bedrooms needed, no extra bedrooms needed or number of bedrooms spare.

## **DEFINING OVERCROWDING AS PART OF MARGINAL HOUSING**

The ABS will need to consider whether to adjust the definition of overcrowding when presenting it alongside homelessness. For example, the CNOS definition excludes visitors to the household, however for understanding overcrowding and homelessness on Census night, visitors may need to be considered. For example, visitors may be staying in the dwelling for some period of time, and especially so if the visitors are homeless. In addition, should overcrowding be identified as those dwellings that require one or more extra bedrooms, or only those which require two or more bedrooms? How should 'not stated' or 'not applicable' responses be treated in the calculation?

While these questions have not been fully considered, for the purpose of the analysis below, the CNOS definitions were used but extended to include visitors on Census night in the calculation. It is not surprising that there are higher levels of overcrowding for households when it includes people in them who do not usually live in the household because the dwelling is not designed to accommodate them on an ongoing basis.

The overcrowding estimates presented below may include dwellings that have been determined as being boarding houses under the homelessness rules, or have people who may have no usual address and were identified as being homeless and visiting other households. In addition, some of those in overcrowded dwellings may also be marginal residents of caravan parks.

Other issues include the lack of relationship information for visitors which is required for the CNOS definition to be applied in full. In the analysis below it is assumed that an adult visitor would need their own room. This may overstate overcrowding for adult visitors.

The figures noted below will need refinement before they are fit to be presented alongside homeless estimates.

## **ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AUSTRALIANS**

As outlined in **Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006** (ABS cat. no. 2050.0.55.001), at the time of the 2006 Census, about one in seven Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households (14%) were living in dwellings that required at least one extra bedroom, compared with 3% of other households. In terms of the people living in those households, 27% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people lived in overcrowded conditions, compared with 6% of non-Indigenous people. If visitors were taken into account in the measure of overcrowding for Census night 2006, the proportion of people living in overcrowded conditions would increase from 27% to 31% for Indigenous people and from 6% to 7% for non-Indigenous people.

Using the modified CNOS, and including visitors, 57% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who were visitors staying with other households (excluding visitor only households) on Census night were in dwellings where one or more extra bedrooms were needed. In contrast, for non-Indigenous people, 30% of visitors to households (excluding

visitor only households) on Census night were in a dwelling that required at least one more bedroom.

Of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who reported being at home and had visitors staying with them on Census night, 65% required additional bedrooms. In contrast, for those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians without any visitors, about a quarter required one or more bedrooms (27%). For non-Indigenous persons, the respective figures were 33% and 6%.

When taking overcrowding into consideration for identifying those who are homeless, there are challenges in attempting to identify which people in these dwellings are likely to be homeless. The complexity in differentiating visitors with a usual residence elsewhere from homeless people in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is recognised as being problematic (Birdsall-Jones et al., 2010). There are many reasons a person may be visiting on Census night, and many of the persons visiting with a usual address elsewhere would not meet the definition of homelessness.

## 'NEW MIGRANTS' OVERCROWDING

Overcrowding that is associated with housing mobility in search of better and more appropriate accommodation for new migrants and refugees may be largely hidden. VandenHeuvel and Wooden (1999) found that nearly nine out of ten immigrants lived in shared accommodation with either relatives or friends when they first arrived in Australia, before moving into other forms of accommodation.

For the following analysis, new migrants are defined to be people who reported arriving in Australia in 2006 (excluding overseas visitors). Most new migrants (95%) were usual residents who reported being 'at home' on Census night.

However, over a quarter (26%) of new migrants (including visitors) were in a dwelling which required at least one more bedroom (26,053 people) in 2006. This compares to only 8% for the total population (excluding overseas visitors).

It is not possible for the ABS to determine whether there was an undercount of new migrants in households, and therefore whether overcrowding is actually higher for this group than as identified in the Census. Cultural complexities that challenge the ability to enumerate culturally and linguistically diverse communities, including fear of government authorities, will contribute to potential underestimates of overcrowding for this sub-population. However, the Census clearly shows that new migrants were much more likely than the total population to be in dwellings where at least one more extra bedroom was required.

## STUDENTS BORN OVERSEAS

International students, defined for this analysis to be full-time students, who were not born in Australia and were aged between 17 and 25 years. This analysis will include students who may have lived in Australia for a number of years and may be permanent residents, or are living with their family.

When visitors are taken into account, international students were identified as having high levels of overcrowding (27% of people) in 2006, in line with 'New migrants'. There were 49,149 students in overcrowded conditions (including visitors) in 2006.

For full-time students who were born in Australia and aged between 17 and 25 years, a

smaller proportion were in dwellings requiring extra bedrooms (11%), slightly higher than for the total population (8%).

## **FUTURE CENSUS IDENTIFICATION AND ENUMERATION IMPROVEMENTS TO ADDRESS OVERCROWDING**

The ABS Census activities for 2011 aim to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and newly arrived people are enumerated in the Census. These activities may help to ensure that overcrowding is better identified.

The ABS will present overcrowding, along with other marginally housed populations in the Census and estimates of homelessness.

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## **Key issues: Construction workers, owner builders and renters of improvised dwellings**

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### **KEY ISSUES: CONSTRUCTION WORKERS, OWNER BUILDERS AND RENTERS OF IMPROVISED DWELLINGS**

#### **SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS**

- The Review analysed the characteristics of 'persons living in an improvised dwelling', and based on the characteristics of some of those identified in this category, it was determined that some people may be in a shed or partially constructed dwelling on their own property while they build their own homes, or they were construction workers. As a result, they were not included in the reviewed homeless estimates. This chapter provides some background data on the characteristics of these populations.
- Submissions identified that consideration needs to be given to people who are living on their own properties in improvised dwellings as a result of natural disasters. The ABS will develop a strategy to analyse areas affected by recent disaster events in the treatment of homeless estimation for 2011. One submission recommended tracking natural disaster areas to enable an understanding of the impact on homelessness. The ABS will utilise the expertise of the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group in the formulation of the strategy.
- There are differing views on the treatment of these populations in homeless estimates ranging from the inclusion in the homeless estimates because these people were likely to be living in marginal housing for some time regardless of whether or not they owned a home elsewhere, to excluding those who owned the dwelling with a mortgage but to track these populations separately.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

In the Census, the dwelling structure is determined by the Census collector. There are a number of broad categories used to classify housing and identify the characteristics of

housing and how the housing stock changes over time. This includes distinguishing between different types of houses (i.e. separate or semi-detached), apartments etc. There is a category 'Improvised home, tent, sleepers out'. This category includes sheds, tents, humpies and other improvised dwellings occupied on Census Night. It also included people sleeping on park benches or in other 'rough' accommodation (ABS 2006a).

In CTH, people staying in 'improvised dwellings' who reported no usual address or being at home on Census night were operationalised as being homeless. However, analysis of those who lived in this dwelling type showed that some of these households have characteristics that suggest they were living in a shed or in a partially constructed dwelling on their own property that had features beyond what would be considered an improvised dwelling. Analysis of selected characteristics from the Census suggested that some people in this dwelling type had the characteristics that would be consistent with those people who were working in mobile construction crews building suburbs or highways, or people in the process of renovation or building their own new homes.

Submissions raised concerns as to whether the rules applied to identify homeless people in 'improvised dwellings, tents and sleepers out' will exclude those living in temporary housing as a result of recent disaster events. They may have high mortgages on their dwelling but may be unable to afford to rebuild their home. They may have the same characteristics in the Census as owner builders. One submission suggested that this group be tracked separately to understand the impact of natural disasters on overall homeless figures, and to see the impact on homelessness as a result of the recent natural disasters. The ABS is developing a separate strategy for identifying and classifying natural disaster areas.

There was a view in one submission that those who were living in improvised dwellings such as owner builders, hobby farmers and construction workers were still people who were living in marginal housing that was sub-standard, and should remain in the homeless population even though they may own a home elsewhere.

One submission requested construction workers, owner builders and hobby farmers be reported separately, regardless of whether they were classified as homeless.

There were some other groups that were not included in the Reviewed homeless estimates, including 656 records that were imputed, but the Census collector had made no contact with the occupants. No details about the people who lived in the dwelling could be established, nor if in fact anyone actually lived in the dwelling. The Review also removed some dwellings that were incorrectly classified as an improvised dwelling: about 500 in manufactured homes in Tweed Heads were removed in the compilation of CTH and a further 200 people living in their new homes in Wanneroo (North metropolitan Perth) were removed in the Review. There was no disagreement in the submissions about the exclusion of imputed or incorrect records in the Review.

## **USING THE CENSUS TO IDENTIFY CONSTRUCTION WORKERS, OWNER BUILDERS AND RENTERS OF IMPROVISED DWELLINGS**

The Census dwelling type variable identifies people who are residing in improvised dwellings which, when used in conjunction with additional variables such as tenure type, mortgage payments, rental payments, weekly income and employment status provide further information about the occupants of these dwellings. The ABS Review used such data to conclude that some occupants of improvised dwellings were construction workers, including agricultural staff and miners who could be in an 'improvised home' for employment reasons, or people residing in improvised dwellings on their own property while they build their own homes and as a result were unlikely to be homeless.

Persons reporting a tenure of 'owned outright', 'owned with a mortgage', 'being purchased under a rent/buy scheme', 'being rented' or 'being occupied under a life tenure scheme' where at least one person in the dwelling was classified as 'employed – worked full time' were considered in the Review to be outside the homeless population. This was based on both their tenure and employment status. This population consisted of 5,054 persons. The Review concluded that they were most likely to be residing in improvised dwellings such as sheds, garages and shacks, which could be on one of the properties that they own while building a house, or alternatively, the employment status of persons in this group indicated that the nature of their accommodation could be due to employment reasons, such as being in an on-site or transportable dwelling away from their own home (construction workers).

Analysis of the characteristics of high concentrations, in particular geographic locations, of people enumerated at home in the dwelling type 'improvised dwellings...' has shown concentrations of people on their mortgaged properties. Specific sites have been examined to determine the green fields nature of the location, or the 'hobby farmer' nature of the area. For example, of the 130 people enumerated in "improvised dwellings..." in the Bega Valley area in 2006, over half had a mortgage on their dwelling, while in the Mackay area the proportion was 40% of the 214 people so classified.

For the group considered to be 'construction workers' (persons in rented improvised dwellings where at least one person was working full-time) (725 persons), the Review analysed the occupations for occupants who were working either full-time, part-time or away from work. The majority of occupations were consistent with the assumption that they were construction workers: 23% were labourers, 18% technicians and trades workers and a further 12% worked as machinery operators and drivers. Over half of persons in this group (53%) lived in dwellings with Internet connection (either broadband, dial-up or an other connection) and 67% of dwellings had two or more bedrooms. This group were generally younger with 45% of people aged between 20 and 39 years. Specific locations, such as new suburbs being built in Port Stephens, were identified in this process. The Review concluded that the persons in such dwellings were not homeless.

After considering all those dwellings where at least one person had an employment status of 'employed – worked full time', the Review analysed similar dwellings where no one in the dwelling reported working full-time. The following shows analysis of three distinct groups namely: 'owners', 'owners with a mortgage' and 'renters' in improvised dwellings where no one reported working full time, and provides data to show which persons were not included as homeless in the estimates.

### **Owners: People who are not working full-time**

People who reported being 'at home' in an improvised dwelling who also reported that they owned the dwelling outright, and where no person was employed full time (2,356) were not included as homeless in the Review. Analysis conducted during the review concluded this group were most likely residing in temporarily accommodation while building a home on their own property. The analysis below shows more detailed data about this group.

Of the 2,356 persons reporting being 'at home' in an improvised dwelling, tent or sleeping out where there was no one in the dwelling employed full time who reported owning the dwelling outright, 42% were in dwellings which had total reported household incomes greater than \$500 a week; with 15% having incomes greater than \$1,000 a week (Table 1).

**TABLE 1 - PERSONS WHO REPORTED OWNING THEIR IMPROVISED DWELLING AND BEING 'AT HOME' ON CENSUS NIGHT, WHERE NO ONE IN DWELLING EMPLOYED - WORKING FULL-TIME (a), Weekly household income(b) - 2006**

	no.
Negative income	16
Nil income	38
\$1–\$149	96
\$150–\$249	328
\$250–\$349	319
\$350–\$499	346
\$500–\$649	434
\$650–\$799	106
\$800–\$999	98
\$1,000–\$1,199	154
\$1,200–\$1,399	64
\$1,400–\$1,699	33
\$1,700–\$1,999	21
\$2,000–\$2,499	35
\$2,500–\$2,999	22
\$3,000–\$3,499	3
\$3,500–\$3,999	6
\$4,000 or more	7
All incomes not stated	74
Partial income stated	156
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,356</b>

(a) Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

(b) Although persons temporarily absent were excluded from this table, the calculations for household income includes incomes of those persons temporarily absent from the dwelling.

In addition, half of the 2,356 persons in this group lived in dwellings which had two or more bedrooms (51%) and 34% lived in dwellings with an Internet connection (either broadband, dial-up or an other connection) (Table 2). For those living in a dwelling with none or one bedrooms, 28% were connected to the Internet.

**TABLE 2 - PERSONS WHO REPORTED OWNING THEIR IMPROVISED DWELLING AND BEING 'AT HOME' ON CENSUS NIGHT, WHERE NO ONE IN DWELLING EMPLOYED - FULL-TIME(a), Number of bedrooms and Internet connection - 2006**

None (includes bedsitters)	No Internet connection no.	TYPE OF INTERNET				Total no.
		Broadband connection no.	Dial-up connection no.	Other connection no.	Not stated no.	
		280	32	68	4	
1 bedroom	492	74	118	16	10	710
2 bedrooms	345	67	118	9	4	543
3 bedrooms	263	80	94	—	3	440
4 bedrooms	49	49	46	—	3	147
5 or more bedrooms	46	—	26	—	—	72
Not stated	49	—	3	—	3	55
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,524</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>473</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>2,356</b>

– nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

(a) Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

In addition to the group discussed above, there were 225 people who reported 'no usual address' who were in an improvised dwelling, tent or sleeping out where there was no one in the dwelling employed full-time and where the dwelling was reported to be owned outright. Of these, 205 were in dwellings with no or 1 bedroom. The ABS Review concluded that these people should be included in estimates of homelessness because they could be homeless and are possibly living in their car or other shelter.

#### **Owners with a mortgage: People residing in improvised dwellings, no one in the dwelling working full time**

The Review identified 379 persons who reported owning their 'improvised dwelling' with a mortgage, with mortgage repayments of \$1,050 or over per month and no one in the dwelling was employed full-time (excluding persons temporarily absent). Based on their characteristics they were unlikely to be homeless and were not included in the homeless population. The Review concluded that the characteristics of this group indicate they could be persons who are repaying a mortgage on land they are purchasing, and who could be in an 'improvised dwelling' while building or waiting to build their home.

In these improvised dwellings, 79% of people were living in dwellings which had 2 or more bedrooms (Table 3) and 63% lived in dwellings with an Internet connection (either broadband, dial-up or an other connection) (Table 3). Over 60% of people in the group lived in a household with reported incomes of \$650 or more per week.

None of the 379 persons reported having 'no usual address'.

**TABLE 3 - PERSONS WHO REPORTED OWNING THEIR IMPROVISED DWELLING WITH A MORTGAGE, WITH MORTGAGE REPAYMENTS OF \$1,050 OR MORE PER MONTH AND NO ONE IN THE DWELLING WAS EMPLOYED - FULL-TIME, Number of bedrooms and Internet connection, 2006**

	No Internet connection	Broadband connection	Dial-up connection	TYPE OF INTERNET		Total
				Other connection	Not stated	
None (includes bedsitters)	14	24	3	—	—	41
1 bedroom	17	9	11	—	—	37
2 bedrooms	27	21	46	—	—	94
3 bedrooms	35	24	20	—	3	82
4 bedrooms	40	32	25	—	—	97
5 or more bedrooms	—	25	—	—	—	25
Not stated	3	—	—	—	—	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>379</b>

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

(a) Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

### Renters in dwellings where no one reported working full time

The Review identified 57 people who reported that they were in an improvised dwelling which they rented and reported rent payments of \$300 per week or more, and where no persons in the dwelling reported working full-time (excluding persons temporarily absent) (Table 4). Mean weekly housing costs, as measured in the 2005-06 ABS Survey of Income and Housing, for households renting in the private rental market, was \$223 per week. No state, and no capital city recorded an average weekly rent in the private rental market that was above \$300 per week. Median weekly rentals in the private rental market were lower than the means, in total and for all states and territories, except the ACT (ABS 2007b).

As shown below the Review examined the characteristics of the households, including number of bedrooms, type of Internet connection as well as household income before determining they were unlikely to be homeless. There were another 960 people who rented an improvised dwellings and had no household members who worked full-time where it was determined that they were likely to be homeless, and were included in the Review homeless estimates.

Of the 57 people who were unlikely to be homeless 70% lived in dwellings with an Internet

connection (either broadband, dial-up or an other connection) and 63% lived in dwellings with 2 or more bedrooms. For those who reported their household income, over a third (36%) reported incomes above \$1,000 per week and a further 21% had nil or negative incomes. The people in this group tended to be younger, with 60% aged under 30 years. The Review concluded that these characteristics indicated that these people should not be considered to be homeless and they were removed from the estimates of homelessness.

**TABLE 4 - PERSONS WITH TENURE BEING RENTED WHERE THERE IS NO PERSONS IN HOUSEHOLD EMPLOYED – WORKED FULL-TIME(a), Weekly rent payments, 2006**

	no.
\$0–\$49	62
\$50–\$74	111
\$75–\$99	144
\$100–\$119	134
\$120–\$139	134
\$140–\$159	63
\$160–\$179	51
\$180–\$199	52
\$200–\$224	45
\$225–\$249	24
\$250–\$274	17
\$275–\$299	12
\$300–\$349	24
\$350–\$449	16
\$450–\$549	6
\$550+	11
Not stated	111
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,017</b>

(a) Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

## FUTURE CENSUS IDENTIFICATION

The ABS will seek advice from the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group and explore the groups discussed above in more detail. The ABS will then determine if there are other characteristics, collected in the Census of Population and Housing, which could be used to further refine these populations and how the data should be separately presented alongside homeless estimates in the future.

For the 2011 Census the ABS will undertake additional analysis to identify geographic areas where construction workers may be generally concentrated or in mobile accommodation and following construction programs. The ABS will consider ways to present information about 'construction workers' as part of those marginally housed alongside estimates of homelessness.

As a result of the feedback received through consultation and submission processes, the ABS plans further analysis to gain a statistical picture of residents living in improvised dwellings on their own properties as a result of natural disasters. The ABS will, along with advice from the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group seek expertise in developing methods for analysing areas affected by recent disaster events.

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## Key issues: Travellers

## KEY ISSUES: TRAVELLERS

### SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- This chapter provides background data which underscored the analysis in the Review of selected 'visitor only' households in the homeless group for 'persons staying with other households'.
- The analysis provided here will be extended as the basis for future advice from the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group as the ABS develops the final methodology for estimating the homeless.

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides more detail about people identified in CTH as 'visiting friends and relatives' in visitor only households which were then not included in the reviewed homeless operational group 'persons staying temporarily with other households' in the **Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006** (ABS cat. no. 2050.0.55.001).

### BACKGROUND - VISITOR ONLY HOUSEHOLDS

Visitor only households are those where all occupants reported that they were not usual residents of the dwelling in which they were staying on Census night. The review looked at people in visitor only households who also reported no usual address on Census night, i.e. they reported that they had no address where they had lived or intended to live for a total of six months or more in 2006.

There were 13,032 people in visitor only households who reported that they had no usual address on Census night 2006. The following analysis describes some characteristics of sub-groups of this population who were not included in homelessness counts by the Review because they were considered to be either travellers (including 'grey nomads'), or people residing in their second dwelling/holiday home etc., or people moving around for work.

### PERSONS DESCRIBED IN THE ABS REVIEW AS 'GREY NOMADS'

The **February 2009 Topical North Queensland Repositioning Study, Final Report**, prepared for the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism, noted that:

**'The grey nomads are a key part of the visitor mix for the parks, and the region needs to better consider the potential, of these and other domestic drive market travellers going forward. Whilst a proportion of the grey nomads will seek out the free overnight roadside or council showground parks, there is a group who will happily pay a premium for better located and equipped parks'** (Department of Resources Energy and Tourism 2009 p. 42).

In the following year, the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism's State of the Industry, 2010 report noted that :

**'Whilst older age groups are currently increasing domestic travel they do not necessarily contribute significantly to total expenditure. The typical pattern for older**

**'grey nomads' is to travel for significant periods of time but spend relatively little money in destinations visited'** (Department of Resources Energy and Tourism 2010 p. 13)

The way that the domestic tourism understands, targets and surveys this grey nomad population informed the approach that the ABS took in trying to distil this population in the analysis that was undertaken in the Review.

'Grey nomads' were defined in the Review as 'people in dwellings where all people in the dwelling were aged 55 years and over, were not in the labour force, and were staying in caravans, cabins or houseboats on Census night'. As discussed above the 'grey nomads' are in visitor only households (and reporting no usual address). These numbers do not include people who were staying with other households, such as with friends and relatives, or those who were unemployed or were employed. Some 'grey nomads' who were travelling with their children or other younger people were not classified in this group because everyone in the dwelling / household has to be over 55 years.

The ABS review identified 2,469 people who were assumed to be 'grey nomads'. Of these, 2,141 or 87% owned the dwelling outright (a caravan, cabin or houseboat), 33 were owners with a mortgage or purchasing under a rent buy scheme and 116 were renting the dwelling (Table 1).

**TABLE 1 - 'GREY NOMADS'(a)(b), Tenure type - 2006**

	no.
Owned outright	2,141
Owned with a mortgage	30
Being purchased under a rent/buy scheme	3
Rented	116
Being occupied rent-free	14
Being occupied under a life tenure scheme	0
Other tenure type	15
Not stated	152
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,471</b>

(a) 'Grey nomads' are those identified as people in dwellings where all people in the dwelling were aged 55 years and over, were not in the labour force, and were staying in caravans, cabins or houseboats, who reported having no usual address on Census night

(b) Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

It is not possible to determine the relationships between the visitors within these dwellings because this information is not retained through Census processing. However most of these caravans and/or cabins had two people in them, (2,090 or 85%) and there were an even number of males and females (Table 2). Of persons in a two person household, 92% were married. The ABS Review concluded that this group are predominantly people in couple relationships.

**TABLE 2 - 'GREY NOMADS'(a)(b), Sex and Number of persons in dwelling - 2006**

	Male	Female	Total
	no.	no.	no.
1 person	286	91	377
2 persons	1,041	1,049	2,090
3+ persons	0	4	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,327</b>	<b>1,144</b>	<b>2,471</b>

(a) 'Grey nomads' are those identified as people in dwellings where all people in the dwelling were aged 55 years and over, were not in the labour force, and were staying in caravans, cabins or houseboats, who reported having no usual address on Census night

(b) Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

**TABLE 3 - 'GREY NOMADS'(a)(b), Whether in same statistical division 1 year ago - 2006**

<i>Usual address 1 year ago in same SD of enumeration</i>	<i>no.</i>
Same as in 2006	187
Elsewhere in Australia	1,117
No Usual Address 2005	978
Not stated	116
Overseas in 2005	33
Undefined	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,471</b>

(a) 'Grey nomads' are those identified as people in dwellings where all people in the dwelling were aged 55 years and over, were not in the labour force, and were staying in caravans, cabins or houseboats, who reported having no usual address on Census night.

(b) Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

Table 3 shows that 45% of persons in this group were in a statistical division in 2005 that was different to the statistical division of enumeration on Census night 2006, and a further 40% reported 'no usual address' in 2005 indicating a number of this group could have been travelling in their 'caravan, cabin or houseboat' for some time (over 12 months). For the 1,831 persons who were in northern Australia on Census night 2006 (defined as QLD, NT and northern WA), approximately half reported a usual residence in southern areas one or five years earlier. The Review concluded that this group may own their homes down south while they travelled in the North in their caravans.

Many of the persons in this group, 1,831, were enumerated in statistical local areas that are prime tourist destinations in coastal areas of northern Australia. The areas that are some of the most common include Hervey Bay QLD (often dubbed the 'caravan capital of Australia'), along the coast north of Townsville, coastal area around Cararvaon and Coral Bay in WA, the tablelands west of Cairns and around Airlie Beach and the Whitsundays in QLD.

Approximately 80% of this group were located in a 'caravan/residential park or camping ground'.

Income can not be used as a factor to further refine this group because often grey nomads will be living off savings or smaller amounts from superannuation / annuities because they are retirees. They would be indistinguishable from those who were in receipt of low incomes such as pensions. Unfortunately, the Census does not give an indication of wealth, which would be useful information to further distinguish this group from those with no wealth and in receipt of low incomes. Low incomes correlated with the industry views noted earlier about low expenditures by this travelling group.

The group identified through the Census as 'grey nomads' increased between 2001 and 2006. In 2001 the number identified as 'grey nomads' was 1,669, 13% of visitor only households. This compares with 20% in 2006. In 2001 the group had similar characteristics to those described above, for example 81% reported fully owning their dwelling, 12 were owners with a mortgage or purchasing under a rent buy scheme and 68 were renting the dwelling. Similar to 2006, most of these caravans/cabins had two people in them and had an even number of males and females in them. The majority (74%) were located in Northern parts of Australia and 71% of persons reported a usual address elsewhere in 2000.

The ABS also investigated other data sources. The review conclusions are supported by a study conducted by Tourism WA and Tourism Research Australia (2007) entitled **Understanding the Caravan Industry in WA, in 2006**. Tourism WA and Tourism Research Australia conducted qualitative and quantitative components as part of their study. The qualitative work identified distinct groups of caravan park travellers including a group they titled 'grey nomads' which was defined as: 'older age group (over 55 years) on an extended trip, often including travel to other states in Australia'.

The quantitative component of the study (n=406) obtained information from travellers

staying in WA caravan parks between April and October 2006. The analysis showed that 40% of all travellers surveyed were grey nomads. Of these 'grey nomads' 86% were adult couples, none were away for less than a month, 63% had more than 3 months away (mean number of nights was 212 or 7 months), 88% had stayed in more than 20 caravan parks in the 5 years prior to the survey, all were visiting more than one state, none were travelling with children, and most grey nomads (91%) were retired and therefore had lower incomes (21% had incomes less than \$20,000 per annum, 50% reported earning between \$20,000 and \$50,000 and 29% \$50,000 plus) all the 'grey nomads' had visited states other than WA.

The survey also collected information about the 'grey nomads' usual address finding that 88% reported usual address interstate (not WA) and 9% within WA. The question seeking usual address information was a tick box question worded as follows:

**FIGURE 1 - USUAL PLACE OF RESIDENCE QUESTION - Understanding the Caravan Industry in WA**

Q35. Can you please tick your usual place of residence? (Please tick only one)

Perth metropolitan area	01
Other parts of WA	02
NSW	03
Vic	04
Qld	05
SA	06
Tasmania	07
Northern Territory	08
ACT	09
Overseas (Please write in country of residence)	_____

The questionnaire provided no option for people to mark or write 'no usual address'. In addition, the term 'usual address' was not defined anywhere on the questionnaire, meaning the interpretation of 'usual address' was left to the respondent. The ABS therefore assumes that the definition was interpreted differently from the specific definition provided with the Census collection instrument.

The ABS is continuing its research into this group and will consider other data sources such as the National Visitor Survey. While it is possible that some people in the Reviewed 'Grey nomad' group were homeless, the ABS concluded in the Discussion paper that on balance, the group is more likely to be travelling for recreation or lifestyle purposes rather than being homeless. Likewise other older people staying with other households (including friends and relatives), or in other groupings, or looking for work or working, and reporting no usual address were classified as homeless.

Further research and advice from the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group will be used to inform whether further rules can be applied to refine the 'grey nomad' characteristics to distinguish those who may be homeless compared to those who are on an extended holiday.

**Other Travellers in caravans cabins houseboats (excluding grey nomads)**

The ABS Review also considered the remaining 3,551 persons who are in visitor only households, reporting no usual address and enumerated in a caravan, cabin or houseboat.

The ABS received advice from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare that SAAP clients who are referred from SAAP accommodation onto a caravan park should be considered part of the homeless population. These clients are not supposed to be paying

rent directly to the park management while residing in caravan parks. To identify these SAAP clients, the Review isolated persons in a 'caravan/residential park or camping ground' with a tenure type of 'being occupied rent free' (21 persons) or persons reporting a tenure type of 'rented' but not stating their weekly rent payments (58 persons). The Review concluded that these 79 persons should be included in the homeless population.

The Review then considered the remaining 3,474 persons who were in visitor only households in a caravan, cabin or houseboat (except persons in caravan etc in caravan park/residential park or camping ground who reported tenure of 'rent free' or 'rented' but didn't state their rent). Characteristics were explored from which the Review concluded that these people were travelling around and have no usual address in the Census context because of their chosen lifestyle - they may well own a home elsewhere. The following is a summary of their characteristics.

Of this group, 63% of persons were in a two person household on Census night. Over three quarters (76%) were in a caravan, cabin or houseboat that was fully owned or owned with a mortgage. Almost half (49%) of persons were aged over 50 years. For caravan, cabin or houseboats that was fully owned or owned with a mortgage, approximately 92% of persons were in 'caravan, cabin, houseboat' that had 2 or more bedrooms, and over a third of persons had connection to the Internet, either through broadband, dial up or another connection. The large percentage reporting fully owning or owning their caravan with a mortgage indicates for many of this group their housing standards are a reflection of their lifestyle choices, rather than homelessness.

A further 38% were employed, either full-time, part-time or currently away from work. Some of the most common occupations in this group include fruit or nut pickers (10%), fruit and vegetable packers (5%), commercial cleaners (4%) and truck drivers and sales assistants (3% each). Most of these occupations indicate seasonal work which could indicate they may be travelling around Australia in a 'caravan, cabin or houseboat' taking up seasonal work to support their lifestyle.

**TABLE 4 - PERSONS IN VISITOR ONLY HOUSEHOLDS IN A CARAVAN, CABIN OR HOUSEBOAT NOT APPEARING AS 'GREY NOMADS'(a)(b)(c), Tenure type and Number of persons in dwelling - 2006**

	1 no.	2 no.	3 no.	4 no.	5+ no.	NUMBER OF PERSONS Total no.
Owned outright	209	1,750	174	258	152	2,543
Owned with a mortgage	6	69	12	10	9	106
Being purchased under a rent/buy scheme	3	4	–	–	–	7
Rented	141	195	68	41	39	484
Being occupied rent-free	9	17	5	3	5	39
Being occupied under a life tenure scheme	–	–	–	–	–	–
Other tenure type	22	43	–	14	7	86
Not stated	79	106	10	4	10	209
<b>Total</b>	<b>469</b>	<b>2,184</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>3,474</b>

– nil or rounded to zero

(including null cells)

(a) Except persons in caravan etc in caravan park/residential park or camping ground who reported tenure of 'rent free' or 'rented' but didn't state their rent.

(b) 'Grey nomads' are those identified as people in dwellings where all people in the dwelling were aged 55 years and over, were not in the labour force, and were staying in caravans, cabins or houseboats, who reported having no usual address on Census night.

(c) Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

**TABLE 5 - PERSONS IN VISITOR ONLY HOUSEHOLDS IN A CARAVAN, CABIN OR**

**HOUSEBOAT NOT APPEARING AS 'GREY NOMADS'(a)(b)(c), Labour force status - 2006**

	no.
Employed – worked full-time	794
Employed – worked part-time	399
Employed – away from work	139
Unemployed – looking for full-time work	182
Unemployed – looking for part-time work	128
Not in the labour force	1,434
Not stated	69
Not applicable(d)	329
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,474</b>

(a) Except persons in caravan etc in caravan park/residential park or camping ground who reported tenure of 'rent free' or 'rented' but didn't state their rent.

(b) 'Grey nomads' are those identified as people in dwellings where all people in the dwelling were aged 55 years and over, were not in the labour force, and were staying in caravans, cabins or houseboats, who reported having no usual address on Census night.

(c) Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

(d) Includes children 0–14 years.

**TABLE 6 - PERSONS IN VISITOR ONLY HOUSEHOLDS IN A CARAVAN, CABIN OR HOUSEBOAT NOT APPEARING AS 'GREY NOMADS'(a)(b)(c), Dwelling location - 2006**

	no.
Caravan/residential park or camping ground	2,786
Marina	82
Other	606
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,474</b>

(a) Except persons in caravan etc in caravan park/residential park or camping ground who reported tenure of 'rent free' or 'rented' but didn't state their rent.

(b) 'Grey nomads' are those identified as people in dwellings where all people in the dwelling were aged 55 years and over, were not in the labour force, and were staying in caravans, cabins or houseboats, who reported having no usual address on Census night.

(c) Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

**People residing in their second dwelling/holiday home etc**

The ABS Review excluded from the reviewed estimates 2,350 persons who were in visitor only households (not in a caravan, cabin, houseboat) which were fully owned or owned with a mortgage. Based on the analysis below, the ABS Review concluded that these people were in one of the following groups: people staying in their second dwelling, for example the dwelling was either a holiday home or that these people move frequently for employment reasons and split their usual residence between two (or more dwellings); or that they were in the process of moving (possibly to start retirement) and had moved from a former usual address.

Over two-thirds of persons in this group were in a dwelling with three or more bedrooms (Table 7). For those persons in a dwelling that was 'owned with a mortgage' (29%) and with a stated housing loan repayment, 94% had monthly repayments greater than \$400, and approximately 60% had monthly repayments greater than \$1,000. The Survey of Income and Housing (SIH) 2005-06 reported that average housing costs for owners with a mortgage for the same period were \$1,465 a month (in SIH housing costs include rates and body corporate payments as well as mortgage payments) (ABS 2007b) thus the majority of this group reported paying average or above average mortgage repayments.

The ABS Review concluded that these dwelling characteristics indicate that these dwellings could be holiday homes, or dwellings used by people who move frequently for employment reasons and split their usual residence between two or more locations, or dwellings acquired by people who have moved from a former usual address upon retirement. Approximately half (48%) of this group were 50 years or over (Table 8). In addition, 44% of this group

(Table 9) were not in the labour force which indicates some of the reporting of no usual address could indicate arrangements due to retirement lifestyle choices.

**TABLE 7 - PERSONS IN VISITOR ONLY HOUSEHOLDS WHICH WERE FULLY OWNED OR OWNED WITH A MORTGAGE(a), Number of bedrooms - 2006**

Number of Bedrooms	no.
None (includes bedsitters)	135
1 bedroom	158
2 bedrooms	464
3 bedrooms	1,027
4 bedrooms	456
5 or more bedrooms	97
Not stated	10
Not applicable	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,350</b>

(a) Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

**TABLE 8 - PERSONS IN VISITOR ONLY HOUSEHOLDS WHICH WERE FULLY OWNED OR OWNED WITH A MORTGAGE(a), Age group and Number of persons in dwelling - 2006**

Age group (years)	1 no.	2 no.	3 no.	4 no.	NUMBER OF PERSONS	
					5 or more no.	Total no.
0–9	—	9	46	69	37	161
10–19	4	16	15	22	28	85
20–29	80	111	43	13	17	264
30–39	148	121	63	57	20	409
40–49	120	93	40	29	16	298
50–59	153	272	31	15	6	477
60–69	111	286	21	10	5	433
70–79	64	79	8	7	3	161
80+	32	24	3	3	—	62
<b>Total</b>	<b>712</b>	<b>1,011</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>2,350</b>

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

(a) Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

**TABLE 9 - PERSONS IN VISITOR ONLY HOUSEHOLDS WHICH WERE FULLY OWNED OR OWNED WITH A MORTGAGE(a), Labour force status - 2006**

	no.
Employed – worked full-time	599
Employed – worked part-time	248
Employed – away from work	88
Unemployed – looking for full-time work	70
Unemployed – looking for part-time work	35
Not in the labour force	1,036
Not stated	68
Not applicable(b)	206
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,350</b>

(a) Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

(b) Included children 0–14 years.

There was agreement in a couple of submissions that those who owned their dwelling should not be included in the homeless population.

### People moving around for work

The ABS Review did not include as homeless 2,957 persons who are in visitor only households which were not in a caravan, cabin or houseboat and which they were renting. Based on the analysis below the Review concluded that these people were movers,

temporarily accommodated in their new city or town, and who on Census night were unable to report a usual address.

For persons in visitor only dwellings where persons reported renting a dwelling that is not a 'caravan, cabin or houseboat', Table 10 shows that of those who reported a weekly rent payment, 60% paid \$200 or more per week. For the same period, SIH 2005-06 showed that average rent for those with a private landlord was \$223 per week (ABS 2007b). This indicates that the majority of these people were paying market rent. SIH also showed that the average number of bedrooms per dwelling in 2005-06 was 3.06. For these visitor only dwellings in the Census where persons reported renting a dwelling that is not a 'caravan, cabin or houseboat', 40% were in a dwelling with two bedrooms, and a further 44% were in a dwelling with three or more bedrooms (Table 11).

Approximately 40% of this group were classified as 'not in the labour force', a further 40% were employed (either full-time, part-time or away from work) and 7% were unemployed (Table 12). For persons that were employed the most common occupations included sales assistants, retail managers, waiters and chefs which can be high turnover occupations. The Review concluded that because people are in these types of occupations some of this group may not have stayed, or be intending to stay, at a particular address for 6 months or more.

A quarter of this group were aged between 20 and 29 years and another approximately 20% were aged between 30 and 39 years (Table 1.3). Over 20% of this group were overseas in the year before the Census and 25% were in a different statistical division to their statistical division of enumeration (Table 13). Some of these movers may be temporarily accommodated in their new city or town, and on Census night be unable to report a usual address. Over two-thirds were in 'major cities of Australia' and the five statistical local areas that were the most common places of enumeration included Surfers Paradise, north Sydney, inner city Newcastle and Fairfield and Blacktown in Sydney.

**TABLE 10 - PERSONS WHO WERE IN VISITOR ONLY HOUSEHOLDS, NOT IN A CARAVAN, CABIN OR HOUSEBOAT AND RENTING(a), Weekly dwelling rent payments - 2006**

<i>Weekly dwelling rent payments</i>	no.
\$0-\$49	52
\$50-\$99	242
\$100-\$149	346
\$150-\$199	350
\$200-\$249	343
\$250-\$299	264
\$300-\$349	186
\$350-\$449	224
\$450-\$549	148
\$550+	311
Not stated	491
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,957</b>

(a) Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

**TABLE 11 - PERSONS WHO WERE IN VISITOR ONLY HOUSEHOLDS, NOT IN A CARAVAN, CABIN OR HOUSEBOAT AND RENTING(a), Number of bedrooms - 2006**

<i>Number of Bedrooms</i>	no.
None (includes bedsitters)	92
1 bedroom	385
2 bedrooms	1,156
3 bedrooms	974
4 bedrooms	237
5 or more bedrooms	85
Not stated	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,957</b>

(a) Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

**TABLE 12 - PERSONS WHO WERE IN VISITOR ONLY HOUSEHOLDS, NOT IN A CARAVAN, CABIN OR HOUSEBOAT AND RENTING(a), Age group and Labour force status - 2006**

Age Group (years)	Employed		Employed		Employed		Unemployed		Not in the labour force		LABOUR FORCE STATUS	
	– worked full-time	– worked part-time	– worked from work	– away	– looking for full-time work	– looking for part-time work	– looking for full-time work	– looking for part-time work	Not stated	Not applicable	Total	
	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.
0–9	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	351	351	
10–19	25	21	3	10	6	112	3	114	3	294		
20–29	293	102	28	38	24	265	11	–	–	761		
30–39	205	65	20	46	18	191	5	–	–	550		
40–49	121	47	15	37	6	158	12	–	–	396		
50–59	100	35	10	23	5	150	10	–	–	333		
60–69	24	18	9	4	3	92	9	–	–	159		
70–79	3	–	3	–	–	59	14	–	–	79		
80+	3	–	3	–	–	22	6	–	–	34		
<b>Total</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>1,049</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>2,957</b>		

– nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

(a) Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

**TABLE 13 - PERSONS WHO WERE IN VISITOR ONLY HOUSEHOLDS, NOT IN A CARAVAN, CABIN OR HOUSEBOAT AND RENTING(a), Whether in same statistical division 1 year ago - 2006**

<i>Usual address 1 year ago in same SD of enumeration</i>	no.
Same as in 2006	844
Elsewhere in Australia	720
No Usual Address 2005	581
Not stated	180
Overseas in 2005	607
Undefined	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,957</b>

(a) Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

## FUTURE CENSUS IDENTIFICATION

Feedback received through consultation and submission process indicates that further investigation will be needed on these groups. The ABS will seek advice from the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group on further exploration of the groups above in more detail.

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## Key issues: Homelessness and recently arrived migrants and culturally and linguistically diverse populations

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## KEY ISSUES: HOMELESSNESS AND RECENTLY ARRIVED MIGRANTS AND CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE POPULATIONS

## SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- The ABS has a strategy for the 2011 Census to enumerate those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, recognising the challenges of enumerating some new migrant communities.
- The ABS will further consider activities to improve enumeration and identification of homeless persons, particularly for identified new emerging populations where Census enumeration efforts have been initiated to foster collaboration and engagement between the community and ABS.
- The ABS will continue to analyse the characteristics of 'new migrants' as identified in the decision rules for each of the homeless groups, to determine if there are any other characteristics to distinguish those who are likely to be homeless compared to those who are not.

## INTRODUCTION

The Review methodology proposed treatment of some 'new migrants' staying with other households on Census night, as a 'culturally recognised exception' because there was no evidence that they were likely to be homeless. These people may have been accurately reporting on their Census form that they did not have a usual address that they had lived or intended to live in for six months or more in 2006. 'New migrants' have been defined as those people who had arrived in the Census year. They would have been in the country for no more than 7 months, and on average would have been living in Australia for only around 3 to 4 months if they arrived uniformly across January to end July 2006. Some of these new migrants would have arrived closer to the date of the Census. The Review did not apply this exception to those who were from countries where humanitarian visas are likely to be sourced from (i.e. persons with a country of birth of Kuwait, Iraq, Burma (Myanmar), Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Iran, Kenya, Burundi or Uganda). The Review also did not remove 'new migrants' who were living in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out, were in supported accommodation for the homeless or staying in boarding houses.

There were 1,309 people who appear to be new migrants from countries other than those from which recipients of humanitarian visas are likely to be sourced who were staying with other households (including visitor only households). These 1,309 people come mainly from New Zealand, China, USA, and the UK (the largest source). Most were most likely to be young families. Other migrants, who arrived prior to the year of the Census and who reported no usual address, were not considered under this exception, and were considered with the rest of the population who reported no usual address under the decision rules for each of the homeless categories.

Around 450 of the new migrants were from the United Kingdom (UK) and most were in family groups, with about 30% of the UK new migrants being under 15 years of age. While about a third of the adults from the UK reported nil or negative personal income (potentially non-working spouses), another quarter reported personal incomes of \$1,000 or more per week. Overall, about 60% of all the adults were staying with other households reporting their household incomes of \$1,000 or more per week. The review had concluded that the reasons of mobility/change of address for reporting no usual address, according to the design and intent of the question, were more likely to apply, on average to these populations, than was homelessness for this group, even though some may have been homeless on Census night.

Submissions also noted that new migrants can have difficulty obtaining secure

accommodation, and were particularly concerned about New Zealand migrants who do not require a visa to work in Australia. There were a little over 150 migrants from New Zealand (NZ) in this category under the review, and only about a sixth of the adults reported personal incomes of \$1,000 or more per week and over a quarter reported nil or negative income. However, in terms of the household incomes of the people these NZ visitors were staying with, 10% reported nil or negative household incomes and 70% reported incomes of \$1,000 or more per week.

## CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY COMMUNITIES: THE CHALLENGE OF ENUMERATION

The Census can be used to enumerate new migrants and refugees from culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) communities who experience homelessness, however, there are complexities in the enumeration of this group, as with the broader CaLD community, including language barriers, illiteracy, and distrust and fear of disclosing personal information to government.

The ABS have special strategies for getting the message of the Census out to ethnically diverse communities. Whilst most CaLD refugees and migrants are enumerated, there are significant complexities in the migration process that can make distinguishing new migrants who are homeless from those settled and housed in their own residence difficult using the Census data.

## HOMELESS NEW MIGRANTS: 'NO USUAL ADDRESS'

In the reviewed estimates for 2006, 1,146 'new migrants' were classified as homeless on Census night, of which over half (56%) were enumerated in boarding houses and 1 in 5 were staying in supported accommodation for the homeless (19%). Fewer 'new migrants' identified as homeless were staying in other temporary lodgings (11%), staying temporarily with other households (9%) or residing in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out (4%).

Whilst the majority of new migrants identified as homeless reported their current location on Census night as their home address (778), around 1 in 3 (31%) people reported having no usual place of residence. The complexities and costs in resettling, difficulties in accessing the private rental market, particularly for CaLD communities all create conditions that are conducive to homelessness (FaHCSIA 2003). Of the 359 homeless new migrants who reported they had no usual address (36% of whom were born in north-west Europe), 14% were employed and 64% were not in the labour force.

## 2011 CENSUS ENUMERATION STRATEGIES

As outlined in **How Australia Takes a Census, 2011** (ABS cat. no. 2903.0), people from CaLD backgrounds are one of the population groups that the ABS is focussing on as part of the public relations campaign, along with young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, people experiencing homelessness, travellers and international students. The ABS has developed a public relations campaign and information for each of these groups.

Almost one in five Australians speak a language other than English at home, therefore there is a need to provide assistance to households that have difficulties in speaking or reading English. A strategy has been developed by the ABS to ensure that the best possible enumeration of CaLD groups is achieved. The communications elements of this strategy include paid media advertising, providing information to community leaders and to relevant

journalists and commentators, translating brochures into other languages, and providing information to migrant education units and community groups.

The Census also employs Collectors with skills in languages other than English, and operates a Language Helpline through the Census Inquiry Service. The Language Helpline caters for 10 of the most commonly used languages in Australia. If the caller is not conversant in any of the 10 languages offered by the Census Inquiry Service, a customer service representative will connect them to an external interpreting service which caters for over 100 languages, and set up a 3-way conference between the Census Inquiry Service, the caller, and the interpreter provided by the external service.

The ABS also identifies, as part of each Census, any new migrant communities where particular attention is given to facilitate trust in completing the Census.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The ABS will continue to analyse the characteristics of 'new migrants' as identified in the decision rules for each of the homeless groups, to determine if there are any other characteristics to distinguish those who are likely to be homeless compared to those who are not.

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# Key issues: Homelessness and other non-private dwellings

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## KEY ISSUES: HOMELESSNESS AND OTHER NON-PRIVATE DWELLINGS

### SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- The ABS proposed in the Review of CTH to create a new category 'Persons in other temporary lodgings'.
- Submissions revealed overwhelming support for the new category and the ABS will include this new category in the final methodology.
- The ABS will continue to analyse people in this group with the view to refine this group, with advice from the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group.
- The ABS will look at ways to improve the accurate identification of boarding houses in the 2016 Census.

### Introduction

As outlined in **Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless, 2006** (ABS cat. no. 2050.0.55.001), CTH uses a number of decision rules to determine whether a dwelling was likely to be a boarding house, and if so, that the persons in the boarding house are likely to be homeless. This is the most complex part of the CTH methodology. Different decision rules are applied to dwellings identified by Census collectors as non-private dwellings as compared to dwellings identified as private dwellings by Census

collectors. These are discussed in detail in the Discussion paper.

Under the CTH rules, non-private dwellings, not only those coded to 'boarding house, private hotel' are considered in the rules to determine whether the dwelling is likely to be a boarding house. This includes where the non-private dwelling was coded as a 'hotel, motel, bed and breakfast' or whether they were in other stated non-private dwellings, including staff quarters.

The ABS analysed the boarding house population in CTH and identified that those who reported no usual address and were identified in non-private dwellings that were clearly not boarding houses, such as staff quarters, halls of residence, public hospital, private hospital, hostel for the disabled, etc, were better presented in a separate category rather than within the boarding house population.

The ABS produced a separate category for consideration in the Review. Overwhelmingly submissions received have supported the separate category. In addition, some felt that the category should be expanded to include those who were in a caravan park. The homelessness services sector has advised the ABS that they often provide 'vouchers' or similar arrangements to homeless persons to stay in caravan parks or hotels when they are unable to accommodate them within homeless services. They have indicated that the use of caravan parks is particularly prevalent in the rural areas with limited or non-existent crisis accommodation premises. The CTH and Review methodology would include these persons in 'Persons staying with other households' but they would be in visitor-only households.

## **USING THE CENSUS TO IDENTIFY PERSONS IN OTHER TEMPORARY LODGINGS**

The new category 'Persons in other temporary lodgings' had 1,970 persons moved into it from the boarding house population in CTH. They have two distinct populations:

- Persons who are enumerated in a 'hotel, motel' who reported 'no usual address', had low income, and were unemployed or not in the labour force. There were 544 persons identified in the 2006 Census in this group. In the Discussion paper, the ABS committed to undertaking further analysis of their characteristics to understand this population.
- Persons who report 'no usual address' and were enumerated in staff quarters, halls of residence, public hospital, private hospital, hostel for the disabled, etc (1,426 persons in this group).

The table below shows the type of non-private dwellings that the 1,970 persons in this category were staying on Census night. Overwhelmingly they included hotels, motels and bed and breakfast. However there are a number of people in other non-private dwellings such as hospitals, staff quarters etc. One submission argued that those who were in a psychiatric hospital, other hospital or a correctional institution on Census night should be included as homeless if they reported they did not have a usual address. As the table below shows, this category includes people in these situations.

The ABS will consider further, with advice from the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group, as part of reviewing the cultural definition of homelessness, whether persons in each of these non-private dwellings should be included in the homeless population or whether any are part of the culturally recognised exceptions. The ABS will undertake further analysis of persons in this category to aid this review.

**Table 1 - PERSONS STAYING IN OTHER TEMPORARY LODGINGS(a), Type of non-**

## private dwellings on Census night - 2006

	no.
Hotel, motel, bed and breakfast	544
Staff quarters	391
Residential college, hall of residence	239
Public hospital (not psychiatric)	302
Private hospital (not psychiatric)	79
Psychiatric hospital or institution	128
Hostel for the disabled	18
Corrective institution for children	30
Other welfare institution	191
Prison, corrective institution for adults	36
Convent, monastery, etc.	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,971</b>

(a) Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

## Future Census identification

To improve the overall boarding house estimation, the ABS will investigate for the 2016 Census compiling more comprehensive lists of the legal boarding house population from states and territories, from local governments, and from homelessness services who refer clients to boarding houses.

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## Future directions

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### FUTURE DIRECTIONS

#### INTRODUCTION

The ABS is developing a broad work program in homelessness measurement, and the methodological review to inform and improve estimation from the Census data is a key element in that work program. The Census aims to count all persons in Australia on Census night. Stakeholders have reinforced the importance of the Census to both provide prevalence measures of homelessness, and track changes over time across the detailed characteristics of homeless people, their dwellings and their geographic locations to be able to both monitor progress and target services and interventions to reduce homelessness. Therefore much of the future work program will look at improvements to the Census itself - both improved enumeration strategies and content review, as well as improved analysis and potential augmentation with additional data sources.

The ABS is convening a Homelessness Statistics Reference Group (HSRG), with members from the sector, from academia, and from government, which will first meet in mid August 2011. The role of HSRG is to advise the ABS on the development, collection, compilation, production and dissemination of robust statistics for use in analysing, understanding and reporting on homelessness in Australia. Its advice will be key to improvements in Census data for analysis as well as in the better approaches to analysis.

The operation of the HSRG is expected to:

- Foster collaborative engagement of sector, policy and academic stakeholders and key

- data producers to identify current research, policy and sector advances that may influence the development of homelessness statistics;
- Utilise expert members to identify statistical requirements, priorities and possible trade-offs in developing homeless statistics to inform the forward work program;
- Provide technical expertise on current and proposed new data sources used in the development and production of homelessness statistics;
- Facilitate sector-wide involvement to build and sustain partnerships for improving homeless enumeration in identified sub-populations e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, youth, and people who experience domestic violence.

The HSRG advice in regard to the Census aspects of the forward work program would be sought on each of the future activities briefly listed below.

## **FINALISING THE METHODOLOGICAL REVIEW**

ABS will work with the HSRG to finalise, for publication in May 2012, a methodology for producing official estimates of the number of people enumerated in the Census that were likely to have been homeless on Census night. There are many aspects of the methodology that need to be finalised, as noted in this Position Paper. Methodological aspects that require analysis of Census data during input processing will need to be resolved by the end of 2011, while methodological aspects that analyse output variables can be resolved shortly thereafter, and will be published in May 2012 along with recompiled estimates for both 2001 and 2006. Official estimates of homelessness from the 2011 Census will be published after second release Census variables are published in October 2012.

### **Concepts and definitions**

One stream of work that will be undertaken that is broader than the methodological review, but will impact on it, is a consideration of the options both for a definition of homelessness and for ways to operationalise them. In this work the ABS will consider:

- the concept of adequacy of the dwelling and where it could be broadened to include the quality of the structure, need for repair and the security of the occupants;
- overcrowding, which is an aspect of dwelling adequacy for its occupants;
- the concept of 'home' - broadening the concept of housing adequacy to include a place to keep possessions, to relax and undertake recreational activities, a place to withdraw, and a place to build community with family and friends; and
- a state of houselessness or even rooflessness.

This work stream will look at homelessness as a concept and for issues of measurement among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, including focus work to ensure the cultural appropriateness of both the concepts and the approaches that the ABS will take to measure the concepts in the Census and in ABS surveys. Understanding the delineation between overcrowding and homeless will be critical in this work.

### **Youth homelessness**

Several initiatives are under way with the 2011 Census that will improve enumeration, and potentially also estimation, of homeless youth from Census data. In regard to enumerating homeless people, including youth, specialist field staff are dedicated to the homelessness count. While exact numbers are not available for the 2001 Census, the resources were increased in the 2006 Census to over 250 staff. For the 2011 Census, these resources have

been increased to over 550 specialist field staff. In addition, the ABS has been working with homeless service providers in each state and territory to encourage accurate reporting of no usual address by all homeless people including those who are 'couch surfing'.

While the initiatives in the previous paragraph are expected to improve the under-estimation of homelessness in 2011, including for youth, some homeless youth who are 'couch surfing' may still not be reported as having no usual address and therefore are unlikely to be directly classifiable as homeless in analysis of Census variables. Therefore, to understand the possible under-reporting of homeless youth in the 2011 Census, the ABS will undertake a quality study of homeless school students soon after the 2011 Census. This study will also scope a possible methodology for a more frequent survey of homeless school students.

The ABS will continue to undertake additional analysis to develop the final methodology for how youth are included in homeless estimates, drawing on the expertise of the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group. Other data sources, including ABS surveys, will be considered as ways to both quantify the scale of underestimation, and potentially provide for aggregate adjustment to Census based measures.

### **Domestic violence**

For the 2011 Census, the ABS will repeat the very successful 2006 practice of jurisdictional lists and the 'green sticker' approach for supported accommodation arrangements. As with youth homelessness, the ABS has also been working with homeless service providers in each state and territory to encourage accurate reporting of no usual address by all homeless people including who may be staying with friends and relatives because of domestic/family violence issues. While this may improve the under-estimation of homelessness in 2011, some people who have fled domestic or family violence may still not be reported as having no usual address, or not be recorded on a Census form at all, and therefore they cannot be identified in homeless estimation directly from the Census. However, using administrative data about those seeking support from services, and other sources such as the data collected from the ABS General Social Survey, and in future surveys such as the next Personal Safety Survey, will help to provide a broader understanding of the homeless circumstances these people.

The ABS will draw on the expertise of the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group to further understand homelessness due to domestic violence and options for using other data in the context of estimation from the Census data.

### **The marginally housed population**

As a result of the review, including the feedback received through consultation and the submission process, and a further brief exploration undertaken into marginal housing, the ABS, with advice from the Homeless Statistics Reference Group, will explore how to define the marginally housed population. Focus group work in caravan parks is anticipated, both to look at the circumstances of long terms residents but also to explore the aspects of long term travelling and how it relates to Census reporting of homelessness. The ABS will then determine if there are adequate characteristics, as collected in the Census of Population and Housing, which could be used to separately identify the marginally housed population. Results of investigations will be presented alongside estimates of the homeless population.

### **Overcrowding**

The ABS Census activities for 2011 aim to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and newly arrived communities are enumerated in the Census. These activities may help to ensure that overcrowding is better identified. While the delineation between

homelessness and overcrowding is being addressed through the review of concepts, ABS will nonetheless present overcrowding, along with other marginally housed populations, in parallel with estimates of homelessness.

### **Construction workers, owner builders and renters of improvised dwellings**

The ABS will seek advice from the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group and explore these groups in more detail. The ABS will then determine if there are other characteristics, collected in the Census of Population and Housing, which could be used to further refine these populations, and decide how the data should be separately presented alongside homeless estimates in the future.

For the 2011 Census the ABS will undertake additional analysis in real time during Census processing to identify geographic areas where construction workers may be generally concentrated or in mobile accommodation. This analysis will in part substitute for the retrospective rules based approach adopted for 2001 and 2006, but also highlight modification to the rules that may assist in refining these populations.

The ABS plans include specific analysis to gain a statistical picture of residents living in improvised dwellings on their own properties as a result of natural disasters and seek expertise in developing methods for analysing areas affected by recent disaster events. The ABS will bring a strategy to the HSRG.

In the longer term, new possible content for the 2016 Census may supply information on dwellings owned by people, other than the dwelling in which they are enumerated in on Census night. This will both inform on this wider housing perspective but also to help delineate construction workers, owner builders and hobby farmers from homeless people.

### **Travellers**

Consultation has already highlighted further areas for analysis regarding this group. While the 'grey nomad' measurement issue will in part be picked up through focus group work in caravan parks, further research on alternate data sources is also needed.

In the longer term, new possible content for the 2016 Census may supply information on dwellings owned by people, other than the dwelling in which they are enumerated in on Census night. This will both inform on this wider housing perspective but also to help delineate travellers from homeless people.

### **Boarding houses**

To improve the overall boarding house estimation, the ABS will investigate for the 2016 Census compiling more comprehensive lists of the legal (and potentially illegal) boarding house properties from states and territories, from local governments, and from homelessness services who refer clients to boarding houses.

## **CENSUS 2016 AND BEYOND**

Some options for improving both enumeration and estimation in future Censuses are discussed in this Position Paper and a few are highlighted above. Another aspect of potential future improvement in homelessness estimation from the Census will be the possible inclusion of new content around, for example, health status, so that the homeless population can be compared with the rest of the population. Homelessness in the Census may therefore be able to be studied in terms of its cause arising from other factors, or its

consequence for other outcomes in life.

## **ABS HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS**

The Discussion Paper and this Position Paper have discussed the potential use of several ABS household surveys to report on past periods of homelessness, from which a picture of the incidence of homelessness can be derived, as well as trends in the homelessness over time, at least for those who transition out of a period of homelessness. The homeless module has been run in the 2010 GSS, is being tested for the 2012 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, and is under consideration for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey. Specific aspects of homelessness and housing, such as in the context of domestic violence, are being trialled for ABS surveys.

## **A 5% STATISTICAL LONGITUDINAL CENSUS DATASET (SLCD)**

The ABS will investigate using the 5% SLCD to undertake longitudinal analysis of the circumstances of those who have been identified as likely to be homeless. The circumstances of people identified as likely to be homeless on the 2011 SLCD can then be compared with their circumstances in 2006, and into the future it should be possible to report on repeat periods of homelessness and long term outcomes as seen in the SLCD. It will also be possible to compare these results, for those likely to be homeless, with the rest of the population.

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## **Appendix - Methodology**

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### **APPENDIX - METHODOLOGY**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This Appendix illustrates the differences between the methodology adopted in the ABS review and the methodology that was used in **Counting the Homeless, 2006** (CTH). There are four main components to the changes made in the ABS review. These include:

- corrections to the methodology to conform with what is stated in CTH, and for consistency between 2001 and 2006 estimates;
- corrections applied to conform with the intent of the Census variable 'usual address';
- corrections for overlaps (counting the same person more than once) that were present in the CTH methodology; and
- restricting the reviewed estimates to the use of Census data rather than using either Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) data on support periods or the independently estimated youth homeless numbers (based on Chamberlain and MacKenzie's National Census of Homeless School Students) that were included in CTH.

The use of the Census night estimate of people staying in SAAP, rather than the count of

people in support periods that spanned Census night accords with the CTH stated methodology. The correction also allows detailed analysis to be undertaken across all Census variables for this group, rather than being restricted to the smaller set of variable available from the SAAP support period information.

Another correction was to remove overseas visitors or owners and staff in 'non-private dwellings' classified in CTH as boarding houses. The CTH methodology states an intention to exclude these people, however the interaction of the succession of rules used to derive the CTH boarding house numbers did not achieve this intended outcome.

The ABS review removed 'persons' whose records had been completely imputed i.e. where no form was collected and no count was obtained by a Census collector. Without any information recorded about the imputed 'person' it is impossible to conclude any information about them, including whether or not they are homeless, or whether they had been counted elsewhere in the Census.

The use of the usual address question in the Census is designed for and intended to measure mobility, and while a response of 'NONE' to this question may be indicative of a homeless state, its use in CTH to denote only homelessness did not consider other Census variables which have accorded a different interpretation for the circumstances of the enumerated people. The review took a wider set of variables into consideration in judging whether particular groups were more or less likely, on average, to have been homeless on Census night. An example is the CTH classification of homeless persons 'visiting friends and relatives' which includes over 13,000 persons in 'visitor only households'. These persons in visitor only households are either there on their own or with other visitors to the dwelling. There is no friend or relative present who usually resides in the dwelling and the treatment of all persons in these households as homeless in CTH has been reviewed using the additional Census information that is available about their circumstances.

The review has also removed from the CTH boarding house category student dwellings, such as residential colleges, halls of residence, and rural student accommodation, which were incorrectly classified as low income boarding houses.

The ABS has also corrected for minor double counting in the CTH methodology. There were 14 people in the CTH boarding house category who were also included in the CTH improvised dwelling, tent or sleeping out category, and another 154 people in the CTH boarding house category who were also included in SAAP in the Census.

The ABS is continuing to work towards a new methodology which takes into account the corrections discussed above and sets out a clear and consistent methodology for identifying homeless persons in not only the 2006 and 2001 Censuses but also the 2011 Census. The ABS will work with the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group to make any refinements to the initial review findings, including the use of any new external data sources as appropriate.

The tables in this Appendix identify in more detail the differences between the reviewed estimates and CTH estimates within each of the operational groups.

## **PERSONS WHO ARE IN IMPROVISED DWELLINGS, TENTS OR SLEEPING ROUGH**

### **Homeless Estimates**

The following analysis refers to persons enumerated in an improvised home, tent, sleepers out who reported either being at home or having 'No usual address'.

<b>Persons considered to be homeless in ABS reviewed estimates</b>	<b>Persons considered to be homeless in CTH</b>
Any person in a dwelling being purchased under a rent/buy scheme, occupied rent free, occupied under a life tenure scheme, 'other' tenure, or without a stated tenure where no one was employed full-time* (5,159 persons)	Any person in a dwelling being purchased under a rent/buy scheme, occupied rent free, occupied under a life tenure scheme, 'other' tenure, or without a stated tenure where no one was employed full-time* (5,159 persons)
Any person in a dwelling being occupied rent free, 'other' tenure, or without a stated tenure where at least one person was employed full-time, and the combined income of all persons in the dwelling was either less than \$2,000/week or no one reported an income* (599 persons)	Any person in a dwelling being occupied rent free, 'other' tenure, or without a stated tenure where at least one person was employed full-time, and the combined income of all persons in the dwelling was either less than \$2,000/week or no one reported an income* (599 persons)
Any person who reported having 'no usual address' in a dwelling owned outright where no one was employed full-time* (227 persons)	Any person who reported having 'no usual address' in a dwelling owned outright where no one was employed full-time* (227 persons)
Any person in a dwelling owned with a mortgage with reported mortgage repayments of either less than \$1,050/month or repayment 'not stated' where no one was employed full-time* (812 persons)	Any person in a dwelling owned with a mortgage with reported mortgage repayments of either less than \$1,050/month or repayment 'not stated' where no one was employed full-time* (812 persons)
Any person in a dwelling being rented with reported rental payments of either less than \$300/week or payment 'not stated' where no one was employed full-time* (962 persons)	Any person in a dwelling being rented with reported rental payments of either less than \$300/week or payment 'not stated' where no one was employed full-time* (962 persons)
All imputed records (654 persons)	
Any person in a dwelling owned outright, owned with a mortgage, being purchased under a rent/buy scheme, being rented, or being occupied under a life tenure scheme where at least one person was employed full-time* (5,051 persons)	
Any person in a dwelling being occupied rent free, 'other' tenure, or without a stated tenure where at least one person was employed full-time, and the combined income of all persons in the dwelling was at least \$2,000/week* (96 persons)	
Any person who reported being 'at home' in a dwelling owned outright where no one was employed full-time* (2,354 persons)	
Any person in a dwelling owned with a mortgage with reported mortgage repayments of at least \$1,050/month where no one was employed full-time* (382 persons)	
Any person in a dwelling being rented with reported rental payments of at least \$300/week where no one was employed full-time* (56 persons)	

Numbers in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data. As a result numbers may not add to the totals.

\*The variables 'number of people employed' and 'combined income' do not include visitors who reported a usual address elsewhere. Therefore a person who is visiting the dwelling and who is employed full-time or has an

income doesn't impact on the identification of other people in the dwelling as being homeless.

## PERSONS IN SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION FOR HOMELESS

### Homeless estimates

The following analysis for the reviewed estimates refers to persons enumerated in dwellings flagged as being supported accommodation, either via the Census list and green sticker strategies, or classified by the Census collector in the non-private dwelling category 'hostels for homeless, night shelter, refuge'.

This category was referred to as 'SAAP Services' in CTH.

Persons considered to be homeless in ABS reviewed estimates	Persons considered to be homeless in CTH
Any person in a dwelling flagged as being supported accommodation in Victoria, who reported being neither an overseas visitor nor an 'owner, proprietor, staff and family' (6,399 persons)	Any person in a dwelling flagged as being supported accommodation in Victoria, who reported being neither an overseas visitor nor an 'owner, proprietor, staff and family' (6,399 persons)
Any person in a dwelling flagged as being supported accommodation in Australia (excluding Victoria), who reported being neither an overseas visitor nor an 'owner, proprietor, staff and family' (7,526 persons)	
Any person, not already included above, who was a 'guest, patient, inmate, other resident' or didn't state their residential status in a 'hostel for the homeless, night shelter, or refuge' (3,406 persons)	
	Any person in a dwelling flagged as being supported accommodation in Victoria, who reported being an overseas visitor or an 'owner, proprietor, staff and family' (35 persons)
	13,413 persons in supported accommodation based on SAAP support period figures.

Numbers in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data. As a result numbers may not add to the totals.

## PERSONS STAYING TEMPORARILY WITH OTHER HOUSEHOLDS

### Homeless estimates

The following analysis for the reviewed estimates refers to persons enumerated in any in private dwelling structure, except an improvised home, tent, sleepers out, who reported having 'No usual address'.

This category was referred to as 'Staying with Friends and Relatives' in CTH.

Persons considered to be homeless in ABS reviewed estimates	Persons considered to be homeless in CTH
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Any person who didn't report being overseas the year before the Census visiting a household where one or more families reside, a lone person or group household, or any other non classifiable household (17,580 persons)	Any person who didn't report being overseas the year before the Census visiting a household where one or more families reside, a lone person or group household, or any other non classifiable household (17,580 persons)
Any person who didn't report being overseas the year before the Census in a 'visitor only household' where the dwelling structure was 'not stated' (20 persons)	Any person who didn't report being overseas the year before the Census in a 'visitor only household' where the dwelling structure was 'not stated' (20 persons)
Any person who didn't report being overseas the year before the Census and was not considered to be a 'grey nomad' in a 'visitor only household' that was a 'caravan, cabin, or houseboat', located in a caravan/residential park or camping ground, and was either being occupied rent-free or rented with 'not stated' rental payments (77 persons)	Any person who didn't report being overseas the year before the Census and was not considered to be a 'grey nomad' in a 'visitor only household' that was a 'caravan, cabin, or houseboat', located in a caravan/residential park or camping ground, and was either being occupied rent-free or rented with 'not stated' rental payments (77 persons)
Any person who didn't report being overseas the year before the Census in a 'visitor only household' that was a 'separate house', 'semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse etc.', 'flat, unit or apartment', or a 'house or flat attached to a shop, office, etc.', which was being purchased under a rent/buy scheme, occupied rent free, occupied under a life tenure scheme, 'other' tenure, or without a stated tenure (1,509 persons)	Any person who didn't report being overseas the year before the Census in a 'visitor only household' that was a 'separate house', 'semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse etc.', 'flat, unit or apartment', or a 'house or flat attached to a shop, office, etc.', which was being purchased under a rent/buy scheme, occupied rent free, occupied under a life tenure scheme, 'other' tenure, or without a stated tenure (1,509 persons)
Any person who reported being overseas the year before the Census and either first arrived in Australia before 2006 or didn't state their country of birth, who was visiting a household where one or more families reside, a lone person or group household, or any other non classifiable household (513 persons)	Any person who reported being overseas the year before the Census and either first arrived in Australia before 2006 or didn't state their country of birth, who was visiting a household where one or more families reside, a lone person or group household, or any other non classifiable household (513 persons)
Any person who reported being overseas the year before the Census and either first arrived in Australia before 2006 or didn't state their country of birth, who was in a 'visitor only household' that was a 'separate house', 'semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse etc.', 'flat, unit or apartment', or a 'house or flat attached to a shop, office, etc.', which was being purchased under a rent/buy scheme, occupied rent free, occupied under a life tenure scheme, 'other' tenure, or without a stated tenure (62 persons)	Any person who reported being overseas the year before the Census and either first arrived in Australia before 2006 or didn't state their country of birth, who was in a 'visitor only household' that was a 'separate house', 'semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse etc.', 'flat, unit or apartment', or a 'house or flat attached to a shop, office, etc.', which was being purchased under a rent/buy scheme, occupied rent free, occupied under a life tenure scheme, 'other' tenure, or without a stated tenure (62 persons)
Any person who reported being overseas the year before the Census, first arrived in Australia in 2006, and was born in one of the top ten countries for humanitarian settlers in Australia, who was visiting a household where one or more families reside, a lone person or group household, or any other non classifiable household (21 persons)	Any person who reported being overseas the year before the Census, first arrived in Australia in 2006, and was born in one of the top ten countries for humanitarian settlers in Australia, who was visiting a household where one or more families reside, a lone person or group household, or any other non classifiable household (21 persons)
Total of 19,782 with a further 203 persons removed due to overlap with other operational groups which leaves 19,579 homeless persons	Any person who reported being overseas the year before the Census and was born in Australia (835 persons)

	Any person, not described above, who didn't report being overseas the year before the Census in a 'visitor only household' that was a 'caravan, cabin, or houseboat' (5,748 persons)
	Any person who didn't report being overseas the year before the Census in a 'visitor only household' that was a 'separate house', 'semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse etc.', 'flat, unit or apartment', or a 'house or flat attached to a shop, office, etc.', which was owned outright, owned with a mortgage, or being rented (4,552 persons)
	Any person who reported being overseas the year before the Census and either first arrived in Australia before 2006 or didn't state their country of birth, who was in a 'visitor only household' that was a 'separate house', 'semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse etc.', 'flat, unit or apartment', or a 'house or flat attached to a shop, office, etc.', which was owned outright, owned with a mortgage, or being rented (205 persons)
	Any person who reported being overseas the year before the Census, first arrived in Australia in 2006, and wasn't born in one of the top ten countries for humanitarian settlers in Australia, who was visiting a household where one or more families reside, a lone person or group household, or any other non classifiable household (775 persons)
	Any person, not described above, who reported being overseas the year before the Census and either first arrived in Australia before 2006 or didn't state their country of birth, who was in a 'visitor only household' that was a 'caravan, cabin, or houseboat' (75 persons)
	Any person, not described above, who reported being overseas the year before the Census, first arrived in Australia in 2006, and wasn't born in one of the top ten countries for humanitarian settlers in Australia, who was in a 'visitor only household' that was a 'caravan, cabin, or houseboat' (84 persons)
	Any person who reported being overseas the year before the Census, first arrived in Australia in 2006, who was in a 'visitor only household' that was a 'separate house', 'semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse etc.', 'flat, unit or apartment', or a 'house or flat attached to a shop, office, etc.', and either wasn't born in one of the top ten countries for humanitarian settlers in Australia, or reported that the dwelling was owned outright, owned with a mortgage, or being rented (459 persons)

14,656 youth aged 12 to 18 years.

There is no other information about these people as they are assumed to be homeless by a secondary source.

Numbers in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data. As a result numbers may not add to the totals.

## **PERSONS STAYING IN BOARDING HOUSES**

### **Homeless estimates**

The following five rules were created and applied in CTH to determine dwellings that were likely to be boarding houses. These rules were also applied in the Review. Once dwellings were established as boarding houses, persons in the dwelling were identified as likely to be homeless, as outlined in the table below.

1. For non-private dwellings identified by a Census collector as a 'boarding house, private hotel' (Basic rules):

- Dwellings where less than 60% of all persons who reported being at home or having 'no usual address'; and were a 'guest, patient, inmate, other resident' or didn't state their residential status in the dwelling:
  - had a weekly income of at least \$600 OR
  - were employed.

2. For non-private dwellings identified by a Census collector as a 'staff quarters' (Basic rules):

- Dwellings where less than 60% of all persons in the dwelling were employed

AND

- Dwellings where at least 60% of all persons in the dwelling had a weekly income of less than \$600.

3. For non-private dwellings identified by a Census collector as a 'hotel, motel, bed and breakfast' (Basic rules):

- Dwellings where at least 20% of all persons in the dwelling reported being at home

AND

- Dwellings where at least 75% of all persons in the dwelling were unemployed or not in the labour force

AND

- Dwellings where at least 75% of all persons in the dwelling had a weekly income of less than \$600.

4. For non-private dwellings identified by a Census collector as 'other and not classifiable' or 'not stated' (2001 convention):

- Dwellings where less than 85% of all persons who reported being a 'guest, patient, inmate, other resident' or didn't state their residential status in the dwelling:
  - were 65 years or older AND
  - were studying and stated the type of educational institution they were attending (This excludes persons studying who didn't state the type of institution they were attending).

AND

- Dwellings where less than 90% of all persons who reported being a 'guest, patient, inmate, other resident' or didn't state their residential status in the dwelling:
  - were under 20 years old AND
  - have a 'stated' religion. (This excludes persons who didn't state a religion or who reported having 'no religion')

AND

- Dwellings where less than 50% of all persons who reported being a 'guest, patient, inmate, other resident' or didn't state their residential status in the dwelling:
  - were employed.

This rule 4 was designed to classify non-private dwellings, that weren't otherwise classified, as boarding houses, whilst excluding other types of non-private dwellings. The intention was to exclude non-private dwellings which appeared to be: retirement villages and nursing homes; boarding schools, residential colleges and halls of residence; convents, monasteries and other religious institutions; hotels, motels and staff quarters because a majority of their adult residents are employed; and correctional institutions for children (CTH, 2008).

#### 5. For private dwellings classified as a 'group household' (2006 convention):

- Dwellings with four or more bedrooms or where the number of bedrooms is 'not stated'.

AND

- Dwellings where the number of 'usual' residents was five or more. (This can include dwellings with up to three people absent on Census night)

AND

- Dwellings where less than 60% of all persons who reported being at home in the dwelling:
  - were employed AND
  - had a weekly income of at least \$600 AND
  - had a need for assistance with core activities AND
  - were either studying at a secondary, tertiary, or other institution, or were employed full-time. (This excludes persons studying at primary or pre schools, and persons that were studying who didn't state the type of institution they were attending)

This rule was designed to reclassify as boarding houses a number of dwellings enumerated as private dwellings. The intention was to exclude private dwellings which appeared to be 'shared households'; working households of unrelated adults; student households and 'mixed' households; and supported accommodation for disabled people (CTH, 2008).

The following table determines which persons enumerated in the dwellings identified in the above rules, were likely to be homeless.

'Selected' dwellings refers to those dwellings that were previously identified as boarding houses using the five rules outlined above.

<b>Persons considered to be homeless in ABS reviewed estimates</b>	<b>Persons considered to be homeless in CTH</b>
Any person who reported being at home or having 'no usual address' and was a 'guest, patient, inmate, other resident' or didn't state their residential status in <u>selected</u> 'boarding houses and private hotels' where the dwelling doesn't appear to be a form of student accommodation (11,375 persons)	Any person who reported being at home or having 'no usual address' and was a 'guest, patient, inmate, other resident' or didn't state their residential status in <u>selected</u> 'boarding houses and private hotels' where the dwelling doesn't appear to be a form of student accommodation (11,375 persons)
Any person who was a 'guest, patient, inmate, other resident' or didn't state their residential status in <u>selected</u> 'staff quarters', which have been reclassified as boarding houses where the dwelling doesn't appear to be a form of student accommodation (417 persons)	Any person who was a 'guest, patient, inmate, other resident' or didn't state their residential status in <u>selected</u> 'staff quarters', which have been reclassified as boarding houses where the dwelling doesn't appear to be a form of student accommodation (417 persons)
Any person who was a 'guest, patient, inmate, other resident' or didn't state their residential status in <u>selected</u> 'hotels, motels, and bed and breakfasts', which have been reclassified as boarding houses where the dwelling doesn't appear to be a form of student accommodation (430 persons)	Any person who was a 'guest, patient, inmate, other resident' or didn't state their residential status in <u>selected</u> 'hotels, motels, and bed and breakfasts', which have been reclassified as boarding houses where the dwelling doesn't appear to be a form of student accommodation (430 persons)
Any person who reported being at home or having 'no usual address' and was a 'guest, patient, inmate, other resident' or didn't state their residential status in <u>selected</u> 'other and not classifiable' and 'not stated' non-private dwellings, which have been reclassified as boarding houses (3,775 persons)	Any person who reported being at home or having 'no usual address' and was a 'guest, patient, inmate, other resident' or didn't state their residential status in <u>selected</u> 'other and not classifiable' and 'not stated' non-private dwellings, which have been reclassified as boarding houses (3,775 persons)
Moved to 'Persons in other temporary lodging' homeless operational group.	Any person who reported having 'no usual address', was either unemployed or not in the labour force, had a weekly income of less than \$400, and was a 'guest, patient, inmate, other resident' or didn't state their residential status in a 'hotel, motel, and bed and breakfast', not classified as a boarding house above (541 persons)
Moved to 'Persons in other temporary lodging' homeless operational group.	Any person who reported having 'no usual address', was not employed full-time, was not in the Defence industry, and was a 'guest, patient, inmate, other resident' or didn't state their residential status in either a 'staff quarters', not classified as a boarding house above, or a number of other types of non-private dwellings* (1,426 persons)
Any person who was not an overseas visitor in <u>selected</u> private 'group household's, which have been reclassified as boarding houses (966 persons)	Any person who was not an overseas visitor in <u>selected</u> private 'group households', which have been reclassified as boarding houses (966 persons)
Total of 16,963 with a further 135 persons removed due to overlap with other operational groups which leaves 16,828 homeless persons	Any person who reported being an overseas visitor in <u>selected</u> 'staff quarters' and 'hotels, motels, and bed and breakfasts', which have been reclassified as boarding houses (14 persons)
	This is not consistent with the CTH 'basic rules' which exclude overseas visitors.

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Any person who reported being an 'owner, proprietor, staff and family' in selected 'staff quarters' and 'hotels, motels, and bed and breakfasts', which have been reclassified as boarding houses (61 persons)

This is not consistent with the CTH 'basic rules' which exclude owners and staff members.

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Any person who reported being an 'owner, proprietor, staff and family' in a 'hotel, motel, and bed and breakfast', not already classified as a boarding house above, having 'no usual address', was either unemployed or not in the labour force, was not a full-time student, and had a weekly income of less than \$400 (3 person)

This is not consistent with the CTH 'basic rules' which exclude owners and staff members.

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Any person in selected 'staff quarters' and 'hotels, motels, and bed and breakfasts', which have been reclassified as boarding houses where the dwelling appears to be a form of student accommodation, such as a residential college or hall of residence (224 persons)

This is not consistent with the CTH 2001 and 2006 conventions which attempt to exclude student households.

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Any person who was an overseas visitor in selected private group households, which have been reclassified as boarding houses (34 persons)

This is not consistent with the CTH 'basic rules' which exclude overseas visitors.

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Any person in a private 'group household', not selected above, which has still been reclassified as a boarding house. (2,330 persons)

These include:

- Caravans, cabins, or houseboats.
- Dwellings with a landlord type of real estate agent, parent/relative not in the same household, state or territory housing authority, or government employer (includes Defence Housing Authority).
- Dwellings with a tenure type of owned, either outright or with a mortgage, or being purchased under a rent/buy scheme.
- Dwellings located in a caravan/residential park or camping ground, marina, manufactured home estate, or retirement village.
- Dwellings where at least 60% of all persons who reported being at home in the dwelling were either studying full-time or part-time, or were employed full-time.
- Dwellings with less than three people actually enumerated on Census night.

- Dwellings where all persons did not state their income, labour force status, need for assistance with core activities, type of educational institution attending, and the number of bedrooms in the dwelling.
- Dwellings where all persons were volunteer workers.
- Dwellings where all persons reported being overseas in 2001, didn't state their usual address in 2001, or were an overseas visitor in 2006. This excludes dwellings where all persons didn't state their usual address in 2001.

A number of these are not consistent with the stated CTH methodology.

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Numbers in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data. As a result numbers may not add to the totals.

\*The other types of non-private dwellings include residential college, hall of residence; public hospital; private hospital; psychiatric hospital or institution; hostel for the disabled; corrective institution for children; other welfare institution; prison, corrective institution for adults; immigration detention centre; and convent, monastery, etc.

## **PERSONS IN OTHER TEMPORARY LODGING**

### **Homeless estimates**

<b>Persons considered to be homeless by the ABS</b>	<b>Persons considered to be homeless by CTH</b>
Any person who reported having 'no usual address', was either unemployed or not in the labour force, was not a full-time student, had a weekly income of less than \$400, and was a 'guest, patient, inmate, other resident' or didn't state their residential status in a hotel, motel, and bed and breakfast, not already classified as a boarding house above* (541 persons)	
Any person who reported having 'no usual address', was not employed full-time, was not in the Defence industry, was not a full-time student, and was a 'guest, patient, inmate, other resident' or didn't state their residential status in either a staff quarters, not already classified as a boarding house above, or a number of other types of non-private dwellings* (1,426 persons)	

Numbers in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data. As a result numbers may not add to the totals.

\* They were classified as Persons in Boarding Houses in CTH.

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## History of Changes

**This document was added or updated on 05/08/2011.**

5/08/2011 Additional chapters. The chapters present analysis on the key issues described in the first release as well as additional information on the methodology applied.

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